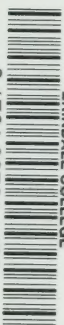


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THE COMPLETE WORKS

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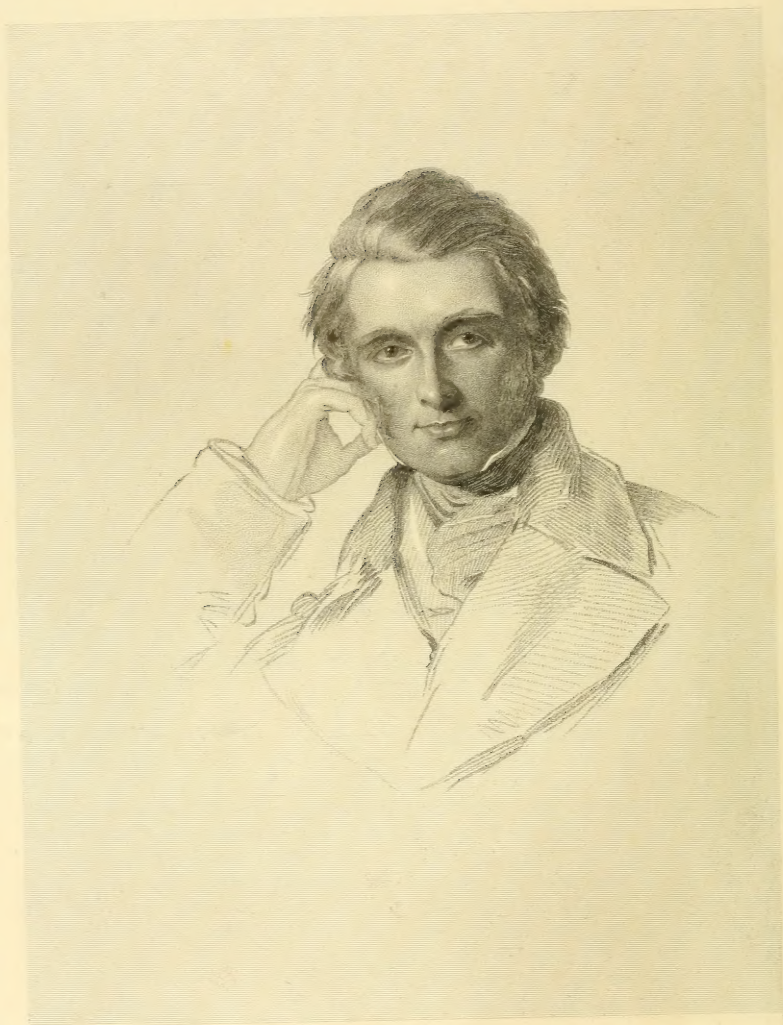
JOHN RUSKIN

VOLUME I



POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE

SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE



J Ruskin.

The Complete Works of
John Ruskin

Poetry of Architecture
Seven Lamps
Modern Painters
Volume One



THE KELMSCOTT SOCIETY
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THE POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE;

OR,

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE NATIONS OF EUROPE
CONSIDERED IN ITS ASSOCIATION WITH NATURAL SCENERY
AND NATIONAL CHARACTER.

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PREFATORY NOTES.

OF this work MR. RUSKIN says in his Autobiography:—
“The idea had come into my head in the summer of ’37, and, I imagine, rose immediately out of my sense of the contrast between the cottages of Westmoreland and those of Italy. Anyhow, the November number of Loudon’s *Architectural Magazine* for 1837 opens with ‘Introduction to the Poetry of Architecture; or the Architecture of the Nations of Europe considered in its Association with Natural Scenery and National Character,’ by Kata Phusin. I could not have put in fewer, or more inclusive words, the definition of what half my future life was to be spent in discoursing of; while the *nom-de-plume* I chose, ‘ACCORDING TO NATURE,’ was equally expressive of the temper in which I was to discourse alike on that, and every other subject. The adoption of a *nom-de-plume* at all implied (as also the concealment of name on the first publication of ‘Modern Painters’) a sense of a power of judgment in myself, which it would not have been becoming in a youth of eighteen to claim. . . .”

“As it is, these youthful essays, though deformed by assumption, and shallow in contents, are curiously right up to the points they reach; and already distinguished above most of the literature of the time, for the skill of language, which the public at once felt for a pleasant gift in me.” (*Præterita*, vol. I. chap. 12.)

In a paper on “My First Editor,” written in 1878, Mr. Ruskin says of these essays that they “contain sentences nearly as well put together as any I have done since.”

The Conductor of the *Architectural Magazine* in reviewing the year’s work said (December, 1838):—“One series of papers, commenced in the last volume and concluded in

the present one, we consider to be of particular value to the young architect. We allude to the 'Essays on the Poetry of Architecture,' by Kata Phusin. These essays will afford little pleasure to the mere builder, or to the architect who has no principle of guidance but precedent; but for such readers they were never intended. They are addressed to the young and unprejudiced artist; and their great object is to induce him to think and to exercise his reason. . . . There are some, we trust, of the rising generation, who are able to free themselves from the trammels and architectural bigotry of Vitruvius and his followers; and it is to such alone that we look forward for any real improvement in architecture as an art of design and taste."

The essays are in two parts: the first describing the cottages of England, France, Switzerland, and Italy, and giving hints and directions for picturesque cottage-building. The second part treats of the villas of Italy and England—with special reference to Como and Windermere; and concludes with a discussion of the laws of artistic composition, and practical suggestions of interest to the builders of country-houses.

It was the Author's original intention to have proceeded from the cottage and the villa to the higher forms of Architecture: but the Magazine to which he contributed was brought to a close shortly after the completion of his chapters on the villa, and his promise of farther studies was not redeemed until ten years later, by the publication of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and still more completely in *The Stones of Venice*.

Other papers contributed by Mr. Ruskin to the same Magazine, on Perspective, and on the proposed monument to Sir Walter Scott at Edinburgh, are not included in this volume, as they do not form any part of the series on the Poetry of Architecture.

The text is carefully reprinted from the *Architectural Magazine*. A few additional notes are distinguished by square brackets.

A few of the old cuts, necessary to the text, are reproduced, and some are replaced by engravings from sketches by the Author. Possessors of the *Architectural Magazine*, vol. V., will be interested in comparing the wood-cut of the cottage in Val d'Aosta (p. 104 of that volume) with the photogravure from the original pencil drawing, which faces p. 21 of this work. It is much to be regretted that the original of the Coniston Hall (fig. 8; p. 50 of this work) has disappeared, and that the Author's youthful record of a scene so familiar to him in later years should be represented only by the harsh lines of Mr. Loudon's engraver.

THE EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION.

1. THE Science of Architecture, followed out to its full extent, is one of the noblest of those which have reference only to the creations of human minds. It is not merely a science of the rule and compass, it does not consist only in the observation of just rule, or of fair proportion: it is, or ought to be, a science of feeling more than of rule, a ministry to the mind, more than to the eye. If we consider how much less the beauty and majesty of a building depend upon its pleasing certain prejudices of the eye, than upon its rousing certain trains of meditation in the mind, it will show in a moment how many intricate questions of feeling are involved in the raising of an edifice; it will convince us of the truth of a proposition, which might at first have appeared startling, that no man can be an architect, who is not a metaphysician.

2. To the illustration of the department of this noble science which may be designated the Poetry of Architecture, this and some future articles will be dedicated. It is this peculiarity of the art which constitutes its nationality; and it will be found as interesting as it is useful, to trace in the distinctive characters of the architecture of nations, not only its adaptation to the situation and climate in which it has arisen, but its strong similarity to, and connection with, the prevailing turn of mind by which the nation who first employed it is distinguished.

3. I consider the task I have imposed upon myself the more necessary, because this department of the science, perhaps regarded by some who have no ideas beyond stone and mortar as chimerical, and by others who think nothing necessary but truth and proportion as useless, is at a miser-

ably low ebb in England. And what is the consequence? We have Corinthian columns placed beside pilasters of no order at all, surmounted by monstrosified pepper-boxes, Gothic in form and Grecian in detail, in a building nominally and peculiarly "National"; we have Swiss cottages, falsely and calumniously so entitled, dropped in the brick-fields round the metropolis; and we have staring square-windowed, flat-roofed gentlemen's seats, of the lath and plaster, mock-magnificent, Regent's Park description, rising on the woody promontories of Derwentwater.

4. How deeply is it to be regretted, how much is it to be wondered at, that, in a country whose school of painting, though degraded by its system of meretricious coloring, and disgraced by hosts of would-be imitators of inimitable individuals, is yet raised by the distinguished talent of those individuals to a place of well-deserved honor; and the studios of whose sculptors are filled with designs of the most pure simplicity, and most perfect animation; the school of architecture should be so miserably debased!

5. There are, however, many reasons for a fact so lamentable. In the first place, the patrons of architecture (I am speaking of all classes of buildings, from the lowest to the highest), are a more numerous and less capable class than those of painting. The general public, and I say it with sorrow, because I know it from observation, have little to do with the encouragement of the school of painting, beyond the power which they unquestionably possess, and unmercifully use, of compelling our artists to substitute glare for beauty. Observe the direction of public taste at any of our exhibitions. We see visitors at that of the Society of Painters in Water Colors, passing Tayler with anathemas and Lewis with indifference, to remain in reverence and admiration before certain amiable white lambs and water-lilies, whose artists shall be nameless. We see them, in the Royal Academy, passing by Wilkie, Turner and Callcott, with shrugs of doubt or of scorn, to fix in gazing and enthusiastic crowds upon kettles-full of witches, and His

Majesty's ships so and so lying to in a gale, etc., etc. But these pictures attain no celebrity because the public admire them, for it is not to the public that the judgment is intrusted. It is by the chosen few, by our nobility and men of taste and talent, that the decision is made, the fame bestowed, and the artist encouraged.

6. Not so in architecture. There, the power is generally diffused. Every citizen may box himself up in as barbarous a tenement as suits his taste or inclination; the architect is his vassal, and must permit him not only to criticise, but to perpetrate. The palace or the nobleman's seat may be raised in good taste, and become the admiration of a nation; but the influence of their owner is terminated by the boundary of his estate: he has no command over the adjacent scenery, and the possessor of every thirty acres around him has him at his mercy. The streets of our cities are examples of the effects of this clashing of different tastes; and they are either remarkable for the utter absence of all attempt at embellishment, or disgraced by every variety of abomination.

7. Again, in a climate like ours, those few who have knowledge and feeling to distinguish what is beautiful, are frequently prevented by various circumstances from erecting it. John Bull's comfort perpetually interferes with his good taste, and I should be the first to lament his losing so much of his nationality, as to permit the latter to prevail. He cannot put his windows into a recess, without darkening his rooms; he cannot raise a narrow gable above his walls, without knocking his head against the rafters; and, worst of all, he cannot do either, without being stigmatized by the awful, inevitable epithet, of "a very odd man." But, though much of the degradation of our present school of architecture is owing to the want or the unfitness of patrons, surely it is yet more attributable to a lamentable deficiency of taste and talent among our architects themselves. It is true, that in a country affording so little encouragement, and presenting so many causes for its absence, it cannot be expected that we should have any Michael Angelo Buonarottis. The

energy of our architects is expended in raising “neat” poor-houses, and “pretty” charity schools; and, if they ever enter upon a work of higher rank, economy is the order of the day: plaster and stucco are substituted for granite and marble; rods of splashed iron for columns of verd-antique; and in the wild struggle after novelty, the fantastic is mistaken for the graceful, the complicated for the imposing, superfluity of ornament for beauty, and its total absence for simplicity.

8. But all these disadvantages might in some degree be counteracted, all these abuses in some degree prevented, were it not for the slight attention paid by our architects to that branch of the art which I have above designated as the Poetry of Architecture. All unity of feeling (which is the first principle of good taste) is neglected; we see nothing but incongruous combination: we have pinnacles without height, windows without light, columns with nothing to sustain, and buttresses with nothing to support. We have parish paupers smoking their pipes and drinking their beer under Gothic arches and sculptured niches; and quiet old English gentlemen reclining on crocodile stools, and peeping out of the windows of Swiss *châlets*.

9. I shall attempt, therefore, to endeavor to illustrate the principle from the neglect of which these abuses have arisen; that of unity of feeling, the basis of all grace, the essence of all beauty. We shall consider the architecture of nations as it is influenced by their feelings and manners, as it is connected with the scenery in which it is found, and with the skies under which it was erected; we shall be led as much to the street and the cottage as to the temple and the tower; and shall be more interested in buildings raised by feeling, than in those corrected by rule. We shall commence with the lower class of edifices, proceeding from the roadside to the village, and from the village to the city; and, if we succeed in directing the attention of a single individual more directly to this most interesting department of the science of architecture, we shall not have written in vain.

PART I.

The Cottage.

THE LOWLAND COTTAGE:—ENGLAND, FRANCE, ITALY:

THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE:—SWITZERLAND AND WESTMORELAND:

A CHAPTER ON CHIMNEYS:

AND CONCLUDING REMARKS ON COTTAGE-BUILDING.

THE POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE.

I.

THE LOWLAND COTTAGE—ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

10. OF all embellishments by which the efforts of man can enhance the beauty of natural scenery, those are the most effective which can give animation to the scene, while the spirit which they bestow is in unison with its general character. It is generally desirable to indicate the presence of animated existence in a scene of natural beauty; but only of such existence as shall be imbued with the spirit, and shall partake of the essence, of the beauty, which, without it, would be dead. If our object, therefore, is to embellish a scene the character of which is peaceful and unpretending, we must not erect a building fit for the abode of wealth or pride. However beautiful or imposing in itself, such an object immediately indicates the presence of a kind of existence unsuited to the scenery which it inhabits; and of a mind which, when it sought retirement, was unacquainted with its own ruling feelings, and which consequently excites no sympathy in ours: but, if we erect a dwelling which may appear adapted to the wants, and sufficient for the comfort, of a gentle heart and lowly mind, we have instantly attained our

object: we have bestowed animation, but we have not disturbed repose.

11. It is for this reason that the cottage is one of the embellishments of natural scenery which deserve attentive consideration. It is beautiful always, and everywhere. Whether looking out of the woody dingle with its eye-like window, and sending up the motion of azure smoke between the silver trunks of aged trees; or grouped among the bright cornfields of the fruitful plain; or forming gray clusters along the slope of the mountain side, the cottage always gives the idea of a thing to be beloved: a quiet life-giving voice, that is as peaceful as silence itself.

12. With these feelings, we shall devote some time to the consideration of the prevailing character, and national peculiarities, of European cottages. The principal thing worthy of observation in the lowland cottage of England is its finished neatness. The thatch is firmly pegged down, and mathematically leveled at the edges; and, though the martin is permitted to attach his humble domicile, in undisturbed security, to the eaves, he may be considered as enhancing the effect of the cottage, by increasing its usefulness, and making it contribute to the comfort of more beings than one. The white-wash is stainless, and its rough surface catches a side light as brightly as a front one: the luxuriant rose is trained gracefully over the window; and the gleaming lattice, divided not into heavy squares, but into small pointed diamonds, is thrown half open, as is just discovered by its glance among the green leaves of the sweetbrier, to admit the breeze, that, as it passes over the flowers, becomes full of their fragrance. The light wooden porch breaks the flat of the cottage face by its projection; and a branch or two of wandering honeysuckle spread over the low hatch. A few square feet of garden and a latched wicket, persuading the weary and dusty pedestrian, with expressive eloquence, to lean upon it for an instant and request a drink of water or milk, complete a picture, which, if it be far enough from London to be unspoiled by town sophistications, is a very

perfect thing in its way.* The ideas it awakens are agreeable, and the architecture is all that we want in such a situation. It is pretty and appropriate; and if it boasted of any other perfection, it would be at the expense of its propriety.

13. Let us now cross the Channel, and endeavor to find a country cottage on the other side, if we can; for it is a difficult matter. There are many villages; but such a thing as an isolated cottage is extremely rare. Let us try one or two of the green valleys among the chalk eminences which sweep from Abbeville to Rouen. Here is a cottage at last, and a picturesque one, which is more than we could say for the English domicile. What then is the difference? There is a general air of *nonchalance* about the French peasant's habitation, which is aided by a perfect want of everything like neatness; and rendered more conspicuous by some points about the building which have a look of neglected beauty, and obliterated ornament. Half of the whitewash is worn off, and the other half colored by various mosses and wandering lichens, which have been permitted to vegetate upon it, and which, though beautiful, constitute a kind of beauty from which the ideas of age and decay are inseparable. The tall roof of the garret window stands fantastically out; and underneath it, where, in England, we had a plain double lattice, is a deep recess, flatly arched at the top, built of solid masses of gray stone, fluted on the edge; while the brightness of the glass within (if there be any) is lost in shade, causing the recess to appear to the observer like a dark eye. The door has the same character: it is also of stone, which is so much broken and disguised as to prevent it from giving any idea of strength or stability. The entrance is always open; no roses, or anything else, are wreathed about it; several outhouses, built in the same style, give the building extent; and the group (in all probability, the dependency of some large old château in the distance) does not peep out of copse, or thicket, or a group of tall and

[* Compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, I. § 16.]

beautiful trees, but stands comfortlessly between two individuals of the columns of long-trunked facsimile elms, which keep guard along the length of the public road.

14. Now, let it be observed how perfectly, how singularly, the distinctive characters of these two cottages agree with those of the countries in which they are built; and of the people for whose use they are constructed. England is a country whose every scene is in miniature.* Its green valleys are not wide; its dewy hills are not high; its forests are of no extent, or, rather, it has nothing that can pretend to a more sounding title than that of "wood." Its champaigns are minutely checkered into fields; we can never see far at a time; and there is a sense of something inexpressible, except by the truly English word "snug," in every quiet nook and sheltered lane. The English cottage, therefore, is equally small, equally sheltered, equally invisible at a distance.

15. But France is a country on a large scale. Low, but long, hills sweep away for miles into vast uninterrupted champaigns; immense forests shadow the country for hundreds of square miles, without once letting through the light of day; its pastures and arable land are divided on the same scale; there are no fences; we can hardly place ourselves in any spot where we shall not see for leagues around; and there is a kind of comfortless sublimity in the size of every scene. The French cottage, therefore, is on the same scale, equally large and desolate looking; but we shall see, presently, that it can arouse feelings which, though they cannot be said to give it sublimity, yet are of a higher order than any which can be awakened at the sight of the English cottage.

16. Again, every bit of cultivated ground in England has a finished neatness; the fields are all divided by hedges or fences; the fruit trees are neatly pruned; the roads beautifully made, etc. Everything is the reverse in France: the fields are distinguished by the nature of the crops they

[* Compare with this chapter, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. 1.]

bear; the fruit trees are overgrown with moss and mistletoe; and the roads immeasurably wide, and miserably made.

17. So much for the character of the two cottages, as they assimilate with the countries in which they are found. Let us now see how they assimilate with the character of the people by whom they are built. England is a country of perpetually increasing prosperity and active enterprise; but, for that very reason, nothing is allowed to remain till it gets old. Large old trees are cut down for timber; old houses are pulled down for the materials; and old furniture is laughed at and neglected. Everything is perpetually altered and renewed by the activity of invention and improvement. The cottage, consequently, has no dilapidated look about it; it is never suffered to get old; it is used as long as it is comfortable, and then taken down and rebuilt; for it was originally raised in a style incapable of resisting the ravages of time. But, in France, there prevail two opposite feelings, both in the extreme; that of the old pedigreed population, which preserves unlimitedly; and that of the modern revolutionists, which destroys unmercifully. Every object has partly the appearance of having been preserved with infinite care from an indefinite age, and partly exhibits the evidence of recent ill-treatment and disfiguration. Primeval forests rear their vast trunks over those of many younger generations growing up beside them; the château or the palace, showing, by its style of architecture, its venerable age, bears the marks of the cannon-ball, and, from neglect, is withering into desolation. Little is renewed: there is little spirit of improvement; and the customs which prevailed centuries ago are still taught by the patriarchs of the families to their grandchildren. The French cottage, therefore, is just such as we should have expected from the disposition of its inhabitants; its massive windows, its broken ornaments, its whole air and appearance, all tell the same tale of venerable age, respected and preserved, till at last its dilapidation wears an appearance of neglect.

18. Again, the Englishman will sacrifice everything to

comfort, and will not only take great pains to secure it, but he has generally also the power of doing so: for the English peasant is, on the average, wealthier than the French. The French peasant has no idea of comfort, and therefore makes no effort to secure it. The difference in the character of their inhabitants is, as we have seen, written on the fronts of their respective cottages. The Englishman is, also, fond of display; but the ornaments, exterior and interior, with which he adorns his dwelling, however small it may be, are either to show the extent of his possessions, or to contribute to some personal profit or gratification: they never seem designed for the sake of ornament alone. Thus, his wife's love of display is shown by the rows of useless crockery in her cupboard; and his own by the rose tree at the front door, from which he may obtain an early bud to stick in the buttonhole of his best blue coat on Sundays: the honeysuckle is cultivated for its smell, the garden for its cabbages. Not so in France. There, the meanest peasant, with an equal or greater love of display, embellishes his dwelling as much as lies in his power, solely for the gratification of his feeling of what is agreeable to the eye. The gable of his roof is prettily shaped; the niche at its corner is richly carved; the wooden beams, if there be any, are fashioned into grotesque figures; and even the "air négligé" and general dilapidation of the building tell a thousand times more agreeably to an eye accustomed to the picturesque, than the spruce preservation of the English cottage.

19. No building which we feel to excite a sentiment of mere complacency can be said to be in good taste. On the contrary, when the building is of such a class, that it can neither astonish by its beauty, nor impress by its sublimity, and when it is likewise placed in a situation so uninteresting as to render something more than mere fitness or propriety necessary, and to compel the eye to expect something from the building itself, a gentle contrast of feeling in that building is exceedingly desirable; and if possible, a sense that something has passed away, the presence of which would have bestowed

a deeper interest on the whole scene. The fancy will immediately try to recover this, and, in the endeavor, will obtain the desired effect from an indefinite cause.

20. Now, the French cottage cannot please by its propriety, for it can only be adapted to the ugliness around; and, as it ought to be, and cannot but be, adapted to this, it is still less able to please by its beauty. How, then, can it please? There is no pretense to gayety in its appearance, no green flower-pots in ornamental lattices; but the substantial style of any ornaments it may possess, the recessed windows, the stone carvings, and the general size of the whole, unite to produce an impression of the building having once been fit for the residence of prouder inhabitants; of its having once possessed strength, which is now withered, and beauty, which is now faded. This sense of something lost, something which has been, and is not, is precisely what is wanted. The imagination is set actively to work in an instant; and we are made aware of the presence of

a beauty, the more pleasing because visionary; and, while the eye is pitying the actual humility of the present building,

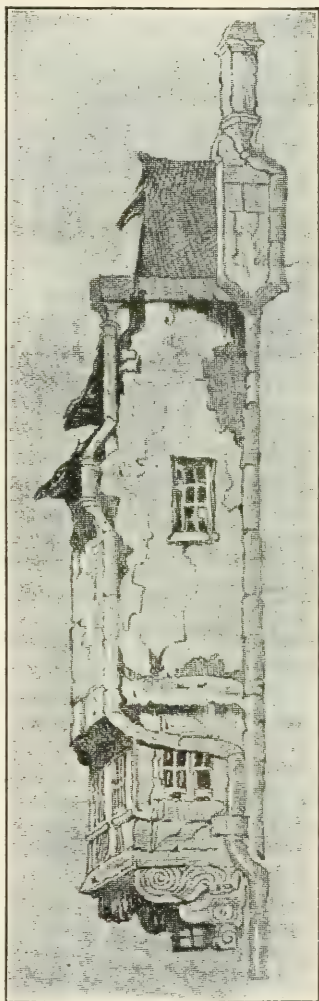


FIG. 1. Old Windows : from an early sketch by the Author.

the mind is admiring the imagined pride of the past. Every mark of dilapidation increases this feeling; while these very marks (the fractures of the stone, the lichens of the moldering walls, and the graceful lines of the sinking roof) are all delightful in themselves.

21. Thus, we have shown that, while the English cottage is pretty from its propriety, the French cottage, having the same connection with its climate, country, and people, produces such a contrast of feeling as bestows on it a beauty addressing itself to the mind, and is therefore in perfectly good taste. If we are asked why, in this instance, good taste produces only what every traveler feels to be not in the least striking, we reply that, where the surrounding circumstances are unfavorable, the very adaptation to them which we have declared to be necessary renders the building uninteresting; and that, in the next paper, we shall see a very different result from the operations of equally good taste in adapting a cottage to its situation, in one of the noblest districts of Europe. Our subject will be, the Lowland Cottage of North Italy.

OXFORD, *Sept.*, 1837.

II.

THE LOWLAND COTTAGE—ITALY.

“ Most musical, most melancholy.”

22. LET it not be thought that we are unnecessarily detaining our readers from the proposed subject, if we premise a few remarks on the character of the landscape of the country we have now entered. It will always be necessary to obtain some definite knowledge of the distinctive features of a country, before we can form a just estimate of the beauties or the errors of its architecture. We wish our readers to imbue themselves as far as may be with the spirit of the clime which we are now entering; to cast away all general ideas; to look only for unison of feeling, and to pronounce everything wrong which is contrary to the *humors* of nature. We must make them feel where they are; we must throw a peculiar light and color over their imaginations; then we will bring their judgment into play, for then it will be capable of just operation.

23. We have passed, it must be observed (in leaving England and France for Italy), from comfort to desolation; from excitement, to sadness: we have left one country prosperous in its prime, and another frivolous in its age, for one glorious in its death.

Now, we have prefixed the hackneyed line of *Il Penseroso* to our paper, because it is a definition of the essence of the beautiful. What is most musical, will always be found most melancholy; and no real beauty can be obtained without a touch of sadness. Whenever the beautiful loses its melancholy, it degenerates into prettiness. We appeal to the memories of all our observing readers, whether they have treasured

up any scene, pretending to be more than pretty, which has not about it either a tinge of melancholy or a sense of danger; the one constitutes the beautiful, the other the sublime.

24. This postulate being granted, as we are sure it will by most (and we beg to assure those who are refractory or argumentative, that, were this a treatise on the sublime and beautiful, we could convince and quell their incredulity to their entire satisfaction by innumerable instances), we proceed to remark here, once for all, that the principal glory of the Italian landscape is its extreme melancholy. It is fitting that it should be so: the dead are the nations of Italy; her name and her strength are dwelling with the pale nations underneath the earth; the chief and chosen boast of her utmost pride is the *hic jacet*; she is but one wide sepulcher, and all her present life is like a shadow or a memory. And therefore, or, rather, by a most beautiful coincidence, her national tree is the cypress; and whoever has marked the peculiar character which these noble shadowy spires can give to her landscape, lifting their majestic troops of waving darkness from beside the fallen column, or out of the midst of the silence of the shadowed temple and worshipless shrine, seen far and wide over the blue of the faint plain, without loving the dark trees for their sympathy with the sadness of Italy's sweet cemetery shore, is one who profanes her soil with his footsteps.

25. Every part of the landscape is in unison; the same glory of mourning is thrown over the whole; the deep blue of the heavens is mingled with that of the everlasting hills, or melted away into the silence of the sapphire sea; the pale cities, temple and tower, lie gleaming along the champaign; but how calmly! no hum of men; no motion of multitude in the midst of them: they are voiceless as the city of ashes. The transparent air is gentle among the blossoms of the orange and the dim leaves of the olive; and the small fountains, which, in any other land, would spring merrily along, sparkling and singing among tinkling pebbles, here flow calmly and silently into some pale font of marble, all beautiful with life, worked by some unknown hand, long ago nerveless,

and fall and pass on among wan flowers, and scented copse, through cool leaf-lighted caves or gray Egerian grottoes, to join the Tiber or Eridanus, to swell the waves of Nemi, or the Larian Lake. The most minute objects (leaf, flower, and stone), while they add to the beauty, seem to share in the sadness, of the whole.

26. But, if one principal character of Italian landscape is melancholy, another is elevation. We have no simple rusticity of scene, no cowslip and buttercup humility of seclusion. Tall mulberry trees, with festoons of the luxuriant vine, purple with ponderous clusters, trailed and trellised between and over them, shade the wide fields of stately Indian corn; luxuriance of lofty vegetation (catalpa, and aloe, and olive), ranging itself in lines of massy light along the wan champaign, guides the eye away to the unfailing wall of mountain, Alp or Apennine; no cold long range of shivery gray, but dazzling light of snow, or undulating breadth of blue, fainter and darker, in infinite variety; peak, precipice, and promontory passing away into the wooded hills, each with its tower or white village sloping into the plain; castellated battlements cresting their undulations; some wide majestic river gliding along the champaign, the bridge on its breast, and the city on its shore; the whole canopied with cloudless azure, basking in mistless sunshine, breathing the silence of odoriferous air.

27. Now comes the question. In a country of this pomp of natural glory, tempered with melancholy memory of departed pride, what are we to wish for, what are we naturally to expect in the character of her most humble edifices: those which are most connected with present life—least with the past? what are we to consider fitting or beautiful in her cottage?

We do not expect it to be comfortable, when everything around it betokens decay and desolation in the works of man. We do not wish it to be neat, where nature is most beautiful, because neglected. But we naturally look for an elevation of character, a richness of design or form, which,

while the building is kept a cottage, may yet give it a peculiar air of cottage aristocracy; a beauty (no matter how dilapidated) which may appear to have been once fitted for the surrounding splendor of scene and climate. Now, let us fancy an Italian cottage before us. The reader who has traveled in Italy will find little difficulty in recalling one to his memory, with its broad lines of light and shadow, and its strange, but not unpleasing mixture of grandeur and desolation. Let us examine its details, enumerate its architectural peculiarities, and see how far it agrees with our preconceived idea of what the cottage ought to be?

28. The first remarkable point of the building is the roof. It generally consists of tiles of very deep curvature, which rib it into distinct vertical lines, giving it a far more agreeable surface than that of our flatter tiling. The *form* of the roof, however, is always excessively flat, so as never to let it intrude upon the eye; and the consequence is, that, while an English village, seen at a distance, appears all red roof, the Italian is all white wall; and therefore, though always bright, is never gaudy. We have in these roofs an excellent example of what should always be kept in mind, that everything will be found beautiful, which climate or situation render useful. The strong and constant heat of the Italian sun would be intolerable if admitted at the windows; and, therefore, the edges of the roof project far over the walls, and throw long shadows downwards, so as to keep the upper windows constantly cool. These long oblique shadows on the white surface are always delightful, and are alone sufficient to give the building character. They are peculiar to the buildings of Spain and Italy; for owing to the general darker color of those of more northerly climates, the shadows of their roofs, however far thrown, do not tell distinctly, and render them, not varied, but gloomy. Another ornamental use of these shadows is, that they break the line of junction of the wall with the roof: a point always desirable, and in every kind of building, whether we have to do with lead, slate, tile, or thatch, one of extreme difficulty. This object is

farther forwarded in the Italian cottage, by putting two or three windows up under the very eaves themselves, which is also done for coolness, so that their tops are formed by the roof; and the wall has the appearance of having been terminated by large battlements and roofed over. And, finally, the eaves are seldom kept long on the same level: double or treble rows of tiling are introduced; long sticks and irregular wood-work are occasionally attached to them, to assist the festoons of the vine; and the graceful irregularity and marked character of the whole must be dwelt on with equal delight by the eye of the poet, the artist, or the unprejudiced architect. All, however, is exceedingly humble; we have not yet met with the elevation of character we expected. We shall find it however as we proceed.

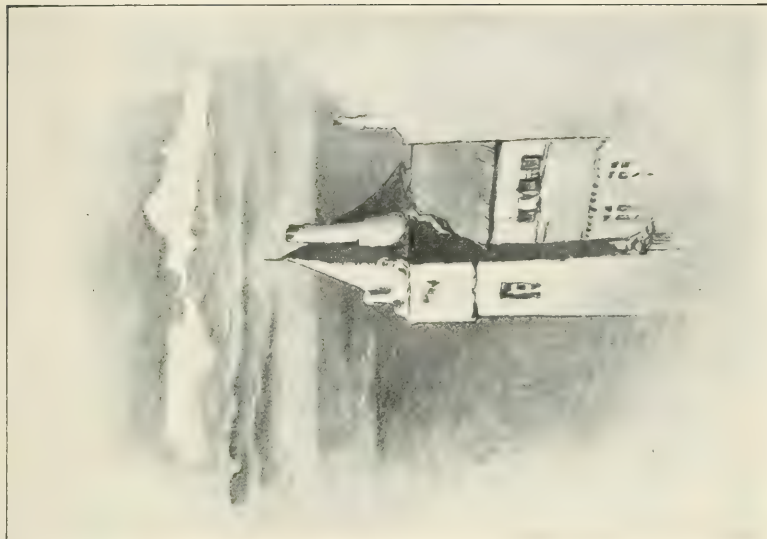
29. The next point of interest is the window. The modern Italian is completely owl-like in his habits. All the daytime he lies idle and inert; but during the night he is all activity, but it is mere activity of inoccupation. Idleness, partly induced by the temperature of the climate, and partly consequent on the decaying prosperity of the nation, leaves indications of its influence on all his undertakings. He prefers patching up a ruin to building a house; he raises shops and hovels, the abodes of inactive, vegetating, brutish poverty, under the protection of aged and ruined, yet stalwart, arches of the Roman amphitheater; and the habitations of the lower orders frequently present traces of ornament and stability of material evidently belonging to the remains of a prouder edifice. This is the case sometimes to such a degree as, in another country, would be disagreeable from its impropriety; but, in Italy, it corresponds with the general prominence of the features of a past age, and is always beautiful. Thus, the eye rests with delight on the broken moldings of the windows, and the sculptured capitals of the corner columns, contrasted, as they are, the one with the glassless blackness within, the other with the ragged and dirty confusion of drapery around. The Italian window, in general, is a mere hole in the thick

wall, always well proportioned; occasionally arched at the top, sometimes with the addition of a little rich ornament: seldom, if ever, having any casement or glass, but filled up with any bit of striped or colored cloth, which may have the slightest chance of deceiving the distant observer into the belief that it is a legitimate blind. This keeps off the sun, and allows a free circulation of air, which is the great object. When it is absent, the window becomes a mere black hole, having much the same relation to a glazed window that the hollow of a skull has to a bright eye; not unexpressive, but frowning and ghastly, and giving a disagreeable impression of utter emptiness and desolation within. Yet there is character in them: the black dots tell agreeably on the walls at a distance, and have no disagreeable sparkle to disturb the repose of surrounding scenery. Besides, the temperature renders everything agreeable to the eye, which gives it an idea of ventilation. A few roughly constructed balconies, projecting from detached windows, usually break the uniformity of the wall. In some Italian cottages there are wooden galleries, resembling those so frequently seen in Switzerland; but this is not a very general character, except in the mountain valleys of North Italy, although sometimes a passage is effected from one projecting portion of a house to another by means of an exterior gallery. These are very delightful objects; and when shaded by luxuriant vines, which is frequently the case, impart a gracefulness to the building otherwise unattainable.

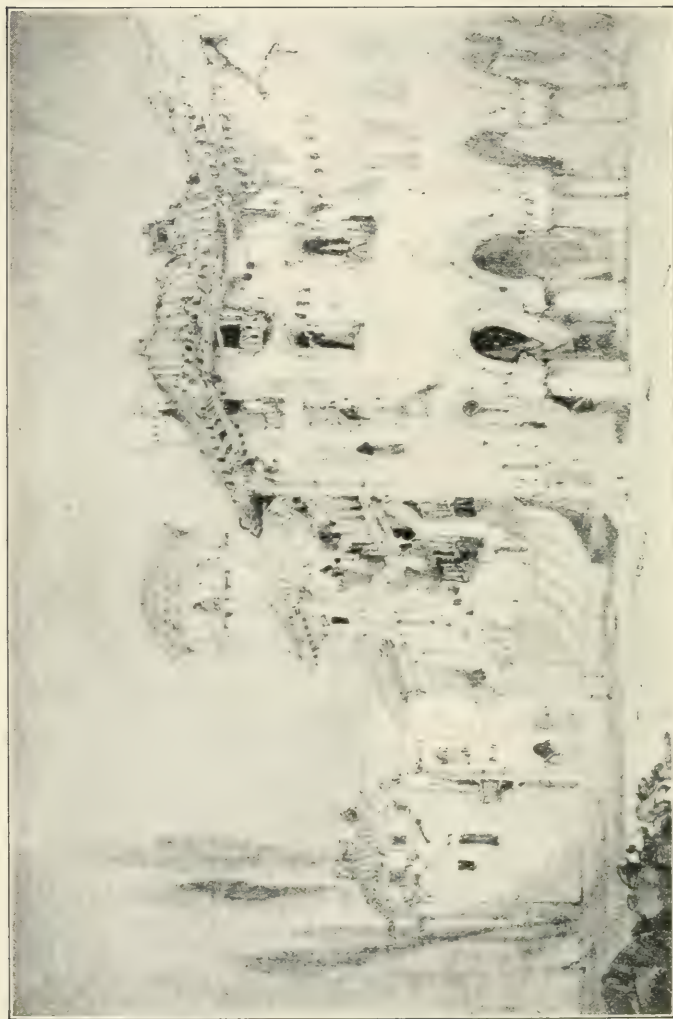
30. The next striking point is the arcade at the base of the building. This is general in cities; and, although frequently wanting to the cottage, is present often enough to render it an important feature. In fact, the Italian cottage is usually found in groups. Isolated buildings are rare; and the arcade affords an agreeable, if not necessary, shade, in passing from one building to another. It is a still more unfailing feature of the Swiss city, where it is useful in deep snow. But the supports of the arches in Switzerland are generally square masses of wall, varying in size, separating



Italian Cottage Gallery, 1846.



Chimney at Neuchatel; Dent du Midi and Mont
Blanc in the distance.



Cottage near la Clée, Val d'Aosta, 1838.

the arches by irregular intervals, and sustained by broad and massy buttresses; while in Italy, the arches generally rest on legitimate columns, varying in height from one and a half to four diameters, with huge capitals, not unfrequently rich in detail. These give great gracefulness to the buildings in groups: they will be spoken of more at large when we are treating of arrangement and situation.

31. The square tower, rising over the roof of the farther cottage, will not escape observation. It has been allowed to remain, not because such elevated buildings ever belong to mere cottages, but, first, that the truth of the scene might not be destroyed;* and, secondly, because it is impossible, or nearly so, to obtain a group of buildings of any sort, in Italy, without one or more such objects rising behind them, beautifully contributing to destroy the monotony, and contrast with the horizontal lines of the flat roofs and square walls. We think it right, therefore, to give the cottage the relief and contrast which, in reality, it possessed, even though we are at present speaking of it in the abstract.

32. Having now reviewed the distinctive parts of the Italian cottage in detail, we shall proceed to direct our attention to points of general character. I. Simplicity of form. The roof, being flat, allows of no projecting garret windows, no fantastic gable ends: the walls themselves are equally flat; no bow-windows or sculptured oriels, such as we meet with perpetually in Germany, France, or the Netherlands, vary their white fronts. Now, this simplicity is, perhaps, the

* The annexed illustration will, perhaps, make the remarks advanced more intelligible. The building, which is close to the city of Aosta, unites in itself all the peculiarities for which the Italian cottage is remarkable: the dark arcade, the sculptured capital, the vine-covered gallery, the flat and confused roof; and clearly exhibits the points to which we wish particularly to direct attention; namely, brightness of effect, simplicity of form, and elevation of character. Let it not be supposed, however, that such a combination of attributes is rare; on the contrary, it is common to the greater part of the cottages of Italy. This building has not been selected as a rare example, but it is given as a good one. [These remarks refer to a cut in the magazine text, represented in the illustrated edition by a photogravure from the original sketch.]

principal attribute by which the Italian cottage attains the elevation of character we desired and expected. All that is fantastic in form, or frivolous in detail, annihilates the aristocratic air of a building: it at once destroys its sublimity and size, besides awakening, as is almost always the case, associations of a mean and low character. The moment we see a gable roof, we think of cock-lofts; the instant we observe a projecting window, of attics and tent-bedsteads. Now, the Italian cottage assumes, with the simplicity, *l'air noble* of buildings of a higher order; and, though it avoids all ridiculous miniature mimicry of the palace, it discards the humbler attributes of the cottage. The ornament it assumes is dignified; no grinning faces, or unmeaning notched planks, but well-proportioned arches, or tastefully sculptured columns. While there is nothing about it unsuited to the humility of its inhabitant, there is a general dignity in its air, which harmonizes beautifully with the nobility of the neighboring edifices, or the glory of the surrounding scenery.

33. II. Brightness of effect. There are no weather stains on the walls: there is no dampness in air or earth, by which they could be induced; the heat of the sun scorches away all lichens, and mosses and moldy vegetation. No thatch or stone crop on the roof unites the building with surrounding vegetation; all is clear, and warm, and sharp on the eye; the more distant the building, the more generally bright it becomes, till the distant village sparkles out of the orange copse, or the cypress grove, with so much distinctness as might be thought in some degree objectionable. But it must be remembered that the prevailing color of the Italian landscape is blue; sky, hills, water, are equally azure: the olive, which forms a great proportion of the vegetation, is not green, but gray; the cypress and its varieties, dark and neutral, and the laurel and myrtle far from bright. Now, white, which is intolerable with green, is agreeably contrasted with blue: and to this cause it must be ascribed that the white of the Italian building is not found startling and disagreeable in the landscape. That it is not, we believe, will be generally allowed.

34. III. Elegance of feeling. We never can prevent ourselves from imagining that we perceive in the graceful negligence of the Italian cottage, the evidence of a taste among the lower orders refined by the glory of their land, and the beauty of its remains. We have always had strong faith in the influence of climate on the mind, and feel strongly tempted to discuss the subject at length; but our paper has already exceeded its proposed limits, and we must content ourselves with remarking what will not, we think, be disputed, that the eye, by constantly resting either on natural scenery of noble tone and character, or on the architectural remains of classical beauty, must contract a habit of feeling correctly and tastefully; the influence of which, we think, is seen in the style of edifices the most modern and the most humble.

35. Lastly, Dilapidation. We have just used the term "graceful negligence": whether it be graceful, or not, is a matter of taste; but the uncomfortable and ruinous disorder and dilapidation of the Italian cottage is one of observation. The splendor of the climate requires nothing more than shade from the sun, and occasionally shelter from a violent storm: the outer arcade affords them both; it becomes the nightly lounge and daily dormitory of its inhabitant, and the interior is abandoned to filth and decay. Indolence watches the tooth of Time with careless eye and nerveless hand. Religion, or its abuse, reduces every individual of the population to utter inactivity three days out of the seven; and the habits formed in the three regulate the four. Abject poverty takes away the power, while brutish sloth weakens the will; and the filthy habits of the Italian prevent him from suffering from the state to which he is reduced. The shattered roofs, the dark, confused, ragged windows, the obscure chambers, the tattered and dirty draperies, altogether present a picture which, seen too near, is sometimes revolting to the eye, always melancholy to the mind. Yet even this many would not wish to be otherwise. The prosperity of nations, as of individuals, is cold and hard-hearted, and forgetful. The dead die, indeed, trampled down by the crowd of the living; the place

thereof shall know them no more, for that place is not in the hearts of the survivors for whose interests they have made way. But adversity and ruin point to the sepulcher, and it is not trodden on; to the chronicle, and it doth not decay. Who would substitute the rush of a new nation, the struggle of an awakening power, for the dreamy sleep of Italy's desolation, for her sweet silence of melancholy thought, her twilight time of everlasting memories?

36. Such, we think, are the principal distinctive attributes of the Italian cottage. Let it not be thought that we are wasting time in the contemplation of its beauties; even though they are of a kind which the architect can never imitate, because he has no command over time, and no choice of situation; and which he ought not to imitate, if he could, because they are only locally desirable or admirable. Our object, let it always be remembered, is not the attainment of architectural data, but the formation of taste.

Oct. 12, 1837

III.

THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE—SWITZERLAND.

37. IN the three instances of the lowland cottage which have been already considered, are included the chief peculiarities of style which are interesting or important. I have not, it is true, spoken of the carved oaken gable and shadowy roof of the Norman village; of the black crossed rafters and fantastic proportions which delight the eyes of the German; nor of the Moorish arches and confused galleries which mingle so magnificently with the inimitable fretwork of the gray temples of the Spaniard. But these are not peculiarities solely belonging to the cottage: they are found in buildings of a higher order, and seldom, unless where they are combined with other features. They are therefore rather to be considered, in future, as elements of street effect, than, now, as the peculiarities of independent buildings. My remarks on the Italian cottage might, indeed, be applied, were it not for the constant presence of Moorish feeling, to that of Spain. The architecture of the two nations is intimately connected: modified, in Italy, by the taste of the Roman; and, in Spain, by the fanciful creations of the Moor. When I am considering the fortress and the palace,* I shall be compelled to devote a very large share of my attention to Spain; but for characteristic examples of the cottage, I turn rather to Switzerland and England. Preparatory, therefore, to a few general remarks on modern ornamental cottages, it will be instructive to observe the peculiarities of two varieties of the mountain

[* That part, however, was not written, as the "Architectural Magazine" stopped running soon after the conclusion of Part II. "The Villa."]

cottage, diametrically opposite to each other in most of their features; one always beautiful, and the other frequently so.

38. First, for Helvetia. Well do I remember the thrilling and exquisite moment when first, first in my life (which had not been over long), I encountered, in a calm and shadowy dingle, darkened with the thick spreading of tall pines, and voiceful with the singing of a rock-encumbered stream, and passing up towards the flank of a smooth green mountain, whose swarded summit shone in the summer snow like an emerald set in silver; when, I say, I first encountered in this calm defile of the Jura, the unobtrusive, yet beautiful, front of the Swiss cottage. I thought it the loveliest piece of architecture I had ever had the felicity of contemplating; yet it was nothing in itself, nothing but a few mossy fir trunks, loosely nailed together, with one or two gray stones on the roof: but its power was the power of association; its beauty, that of fitness and humility.

39. How different is this from what modern architects erect, when they attempt to produce what is, by courtesy, called a Swiss cottage. The modern building known in Britain by that name has very long chimneys, covered with various exceedingly ingenious devices for the convenient reception and hospitable entertainment of soot, supposed by the innocent and deluded proprietor to be "meant for ornament." Its gable roof slopes at an acute angle, and terminates in an interesting and romantic manner, at each extremity, in a tooth-pick. Its walls are very precisely and prettily plastered; and it is rendered quite complete by the addition of two neat little bow windows, supported on neat little mahogany brackets, full of neat little squares of red and yellow glass. Its door is approached under a neat little veranda, "uncommon green," and is flanked on each side by a neat little round table, with all its legs of different lengths, and by a variety of neat little wooden chairs, all very peculiarly uncomfortable, and amazingly full of earwigs: the whole being surrounded by a garden full of flints, burnt bricks and cinders, with some water in the middle, and a fountain in the middle of it, which

won't play; accompanied by some goldfish, which won't swim; and by two or three ducks, which will splash. Now, I am excessively sorry to inform the members of any respectable English family, who are making themselves uncomfortable in one of these ingenious conceptions, under the idea that they are living in a Swiss cottage, that they labor under a melancholy deception; and shall now proceed to investigate the peculiarities of the real building.

40. The life of a Swiss peasant is divided into two periods; that in which he is watching his cattle at their summer pasture on the high Alps,* and that in which he seeks shelter from the violence of the winter storms in the most retired parts of the low valleys. During the first period, he requires only occasional shelter from storms of excessive violence; during the latter, a sufficient protection from continued inclement weather. The Alpine or summer cottage, therefore, is a rude log hut, formed of unsquared pine trunks, notched into each other at the corners. The roof being excessively flat, so as to offer no surface to the wind, is covered with fragments of any stone that will split easily, held on by crossing logs; which are in their turn kept down by masses of stone; the whole being generally sheltered behind some protecting rock, or resting against the slope of the mountain, so that, from one side, you may step upon the roof. That is the *châlet*. When well grouped, running along a slope of mountain side, these huts produce a very pleasing effect, being never obtrusive (owing to the prevailing grayness of their tone), uniting well with surrounding objects, and bestowing at once animation and character.

41. But the winter residence, the Swiss cottage, properly so-called is a much more elaborate piece of workmanship. The principal requisite is, of course, strength: and this is always observable in the large size of the timbers, and the ingenious manner in which they are joined, so as to support and relieve each other, when any of them are severely tried.

* I use the word Alp here, and in future, in its proper sense, of a high mountain pasture; not in its secondary sense, of a snowy peak.

The roof is always very flat, generally meeting at an angle of 155° , and projecting from 5 ft. to 7 ft. over the cottage side, in order to prevent the windows from being thoroughly clogged up with snow. That this projection may not be



FIG. 3. Swiss Cottage. 1837.

crushed down by the enormous weight of snow which it must sometimes sustain, it is assisted by strong wooden supports (seen in Fig. 3), which sometimes extend half down the walls for the sake of strength, divide the side into regular compartments, and are rendered ornamental by grotesque

carving. Every canton has its own window. That of Uri, with its diamond wood-work at the bottom, is, perhaps, one of the richest. (See Fig. 4.) The galleries are generally rendered ornamental by a great deal of labor bestowed upon

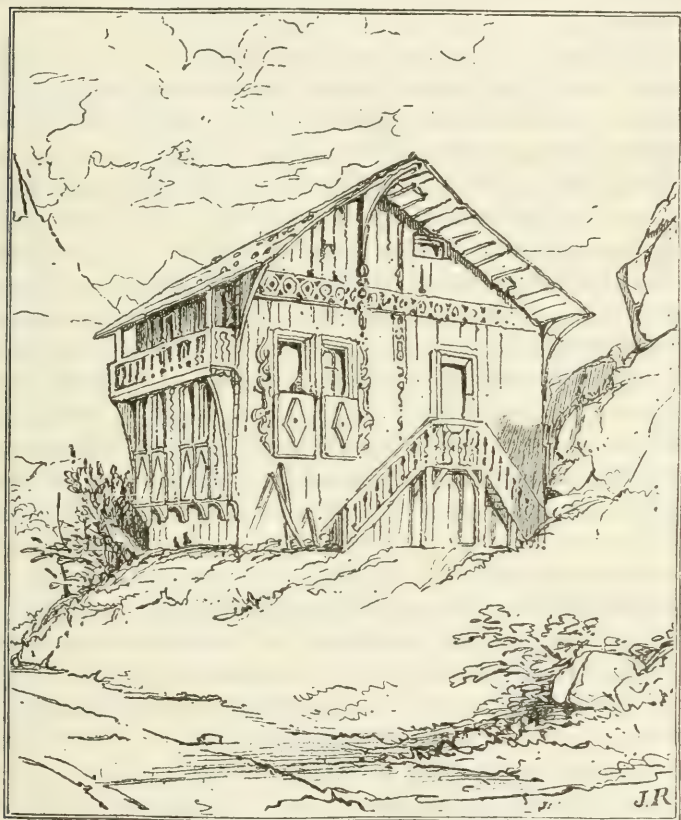


FIG. 4. Cottage near Altorf. 1835.

their wood-work. This is best executed in the canton of Berne. The door is always six or seven feet from the ground, and occasionally much more, that it may be accessible in snow; and is reached by an oblique gallery, leading up to a horizontal one, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. The base of the

cottage is formed of stone, generally whitewashed. The chimneys must have a chapter to themselves; they are splendid examples of utility combined with ornament.

Such are the chief characteristics of the Swiss cottage, separately considered. I must now take notice of its effect in scenery.

42. When one has been wandering for a whole morning through a valley of perfect silence, where everything around, which is motionless, is colossal, and everything which has motion, resistless; where the strength and the glory of nature are principally developed in the very forces which feed upon her majesty; and where, in the midst of mightiness which seems imperishable, all that is indeed eternal is the influence of desolation; one is apt to be surprised, and by no means agreeably, to find, crouched behind some projecting rock, a piece of architecture which is neat in the extreme, though in the midst of wildness, weak in the midst of strength, contemptible in the midst of immensity. There is something offensive in its neatness: for the wood is almost always perfectly clean, and looks as if it had just been cut; it is consequently raw in its color, and destitute of all variety of tone. This is especially disagreeable, when the eye has been previously accustomed to, and finds, everywhere around, the exquisite mingling of color, and confused, though perpetually graceful, forms, by which the details of mountain scenery are peculiarly distinguished. Every fragment of rock is finished in its effect, tinted with thousands of pale lichens and fresh mosses; every pine tree is warm with the life of various vegetation; every grassy bank glowing with mellowed color, and waving with delicate leafage. How, then, can the contrast be otherwise than painful, between this perfect loveliness, and the dead, raw, lifeless surface of the deal boards of the cottage. Its weakness is pitiable; for, though there is always evidence of considerable strength on close examination, there is no *effect* of strength: the real thickness of the logs is concealed by the cutting and carving of their exposed surfaces; and even what is seen is felt to be so utterly contemptible,

when opposed to the destructive forces which are in operation around, that the feelings are irritated at the imagined audacity of the inanimate object, with the self-conceit of its impotence; and, finally, the eye is offended at its want of size. It does not, as might be at first supposed, enhance the sublimity of surrounding scenery by its littleness, for it provokes no comparison; and there must be proportion between objects, or they cannot be compared. If the Parthenon, or the Pyramid of Cheops, or St. Peter's, were placed in the same situation, the mind would first form a just estimate of the magnificence of the building, and then be trebly impressed with the size of the masses which overwhelmed it. The architecture would not lose, and the crags would gain, by the juxtaposition; but the cottage, which must be felt to be a thing which the weakest stream of the Alps could toss down before it like a foam-globe, is offensively contemptible: it is like a child's toy let fall accidentally on the hillside; it does not unite with the scene; it is not content to sink into a quiet corner, and personify humility and peace; but it draws attention upon itself by its pretension to decoration, while its decorations themselves cannot bear examination, because they are useless, unmeaning and incongruous.

43. So much for its faults; and I have had no mercy upon them, the rather, because I am always afraid of being biased in its favor by my excessive love for its sweet nationality. Now for its beauties. Wherever it is found, it always suggests ideas of a gentle, pure, and pastoral life.* One feels that the peasants whose hands carved the planks so neatly, and adorned their cottage so industriously, and still preserve it so perfectly, and so neatly, can be no dull, drunken, lazy boors; one feels, also, that it requires both firm resolution, and determined industry, to maintain so successful a struggle against "the crush of thunder, and the warring winds." Sweet ideas float over the imagination of such passages of peasant life as the gentle Walton so loved; of the full milk-pail, and the mantling cream-bowl; of the evening dance and

[* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. xi, and vol. v. chap. ix.]

the matin song; of the herdsmen on the Alps, of the maidens by the fountain; of all that is peculiarly and indisputably Swiss. For the cottage is beautifully national; there is nothing to be found the least like it in any other country. The moment a glimpse is caught of its projecting galleries, one knows that it is the land of Tell and Winkelried; and the traveler feels, that, were he indeed Swiss-born and Alp-bred, a bit of that carved plank, meeting his eye in a foreign land, would be as effectual as a note of the *Ranz des Vaches* upon the ear.

44. Again, when a number of these cottages are grouped together, they break upon each other's formality, and form a mass of fantastic proportion, of carved window and overhanging roof, full of character and picturesque in the extreme. An excellent example of this is the Bernese village of Unterseen. Again, when the ornament is not very elaborate, yet enough to preserve the character, and the cottage is old, and not very well kept (suppose in a Catholic canton), and a little rotten, the effect is beautiful: the timber becomes weather-stained, and of a fine warm brown, harmonizing delightfully with the gray stones on the roof, and the dark green of surrounding pines. If it be fortunate enough to be situated in some quiet glen, out of sight of the gigantic features of the scene, and surrounded with cliffs to which it bears some proportion; and if it be partially concealed, not intruding on the eye, but well united with everything around, it becomes altogether perfect; humble, beautiful, and interesting. Perhaps no cottage can then be found to equal it; and none can be more finished in effect, graceful in detail, and characteristic as a whole.

45. The ornaments employed in the decoration of the Swiss cottage do not demand much attention; they are usually formed in a most simple manner, by thin laths, which are carved into any fanciful form, or in which rows of holes are cut, generally diamond shaped; and they are then nailed one above another to give the carving depth. Pinnacles are never raised on the roof, though carved spikes



Swiss Chalet Balcony. 1842.

are occasionally suspended from it at the angles. No ornamental work is ever employed to disguise the beams of the projecting part of the roof, nor does any run along its edges. The galleries, in the canton of Uri, are occasionally supported on arched beams, as shown in Fig. 4, which have a very pleasing effect.

46. Of the adaptation of the building to climate and character, little can be said. When I called it "national," I meant only that it was quite *sui generis*, and, therefore, being only found in Switzerland, might be considered as a national building; though it has none of the mysterious connection with the mind of its inhabitants which is evident in all really fine edifices. But there is a reason for this; Switzerland has no climate, properly speaking, but an assemblage of every climate, from Italy to the Pole; the vine wild in its valleys, the ice eternal on its crags. The Swiss themselves are what we might have expected in persons dwelling in such a climate; they have no character. The sluggish nature of the air of the valleys has a malignant operation on the mind; and even the mountaineers, though generally shrewd and intellectual, have no perceptible nationality: they have no language, except a mixture of Italian and bad German; they have no peculiar turn of mind; they might be taken as easily for Germans as for Swiss. No correspondence, consequently, can exist between national architecture and national character, where the latter is not distinguishable. Generally speaking, then, the Swiss cottage cannot be said to be built in good taste; but it is occasionally picturesque, frequently pleasing, and, under a favorable concurrence of circumstances, beautiful. It is not, however, a thing to be imitated; it is always, when out of its own country, incongruous; it never harmonizes with anything around it, and can therefore be employed only in mimicry of what does not exist, not in improvement of what does. I mean, that any one who has on his estate a dingle shaded with larches or pines, with a rapid stream, may manufacture a bit of Switzerland as a toy; but such imitations are always

contemptible, and he cannot use the Swiss cottage in any other way. A modified form of it, however, as will be hereafter shown, may be employed with advantage. I hope, in my next paper, to derive more satisfaction from the contemplation of the mountain cottage of Westmoreland, than I have been able to obtain from that of the Swiss.

IV.

THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE—WESTMORELAND.

47. WHEN I devoted so much time to the consideration of the peculiarities of the Swiss cottage, I did not previously endeavor to ascertain what the mind, influenced by the feelings excited by the nature of its situation, would be induced to expect, or disposed to admire. I thus deviated from the general rule which I hope to be able to follow out; but I did so only because the subject for consideration was incapable of fulfilling the expectation when excited, or corresponding with the conception when formed. But now, in order to appreciate the beauty of the Westmoreland cottage, it will be necessary to fix upon a standard of excellence, with which it may be compared.

One of the principal charms of mountain scenery is its solitude. Now, just as silence is never perfect or deep without motion, solitude is never perfect without some vestige of life. Even desolation is not felt to be utter, unless in some slight degree interrupted: unless the cricket is chirping on the lonely hearth, or the vulture soaring over the field of corpses, or the one mourner lamenting over the red ruins of the devastated village, that devastation is not felt to be complete. The anathema of the prophet does not wholly leave the curse of loneliness upon the mighty city, until he tells us that "the satyr shall dance there." And, if desolation, which is the destruction of life, cannot leave its impression perfect without some interruption, much less can solitude, which is only the absence of life, be felt without some contrast. Accordingly, it is, perhaps, never so perfect as when a populous and highly cultivated plain,

immediately beneath, is visible through the rugged ravines, or over the cloudy summits of some tall, vast, and voiceless mountain.

48. When such a prospect is not attainable, one of the chief uses of the mountain cottage, paradoxical as the idea may appear, is to increase this sense of solitude. Now, as it will only do so when it is seen at a considerable distance, it is necessary that it should be visible, or, at least, that its presence should be indicated, over a considerable portion of surrounding space. It must not, therefore, be too much shaded by trees, or it will be useless; but if, on the contrary, it be too conspicuous on the open hillside, it will be liable to most of the objections which were advanced against the Swiss cottage, and to another, which was not then noticed. Anything which, to the eye, is split into parts, appears less as a whole than what is undivided. Now, a considerable mass, of whatever tone or color it may consist, is as easily divisible by dots as by lines; that is, a conspicuous point, on any part of its surface, will divide it into two portions, each of which will be individually measured by the eye, but which will never make the impression which they would have made, had their unity not been interrupted. A conspicuous cottage on a distant mountain side has this effect in a fatal degree, and is, therefore, always intolerable.

49. It should accordingly, in order to reconcile the attainment of the good, with the avoidance of the evil, be barely visible: it should not tell as a cottage on the eye, though it should on the mind; for be it observed that, if it is only by the closest investigation that we can ascertain it to be a human habitation, it will answer the purpose of increasing the solitude quite as well as if it were evidently so; because this impression is produced by its appeal to the thoughts, not by its effect on the eye. Its color, therefore, should be as nearly as possible that of the hill on which, or the crag beneath which, it is placed; its form, one that will incorporate well with the ground, and approach that of a large stone more than of anything else. The color will conse-

quently, if this rule be followed, be subdued and grayish, but rather warm; and the form simple, graceful, and unpretending. The building should retain the same general character on a closer examination. Everything about it should be natural, and should appear as if the influences and forces which were in operation around it had been too strong to be resisted, and had rendered all efforts of art to check their power, or conceal the evidence of their action, entirely unavailing. It cannot but be an alien child of the mountains; but it must show that it has been adopted and cherished by them. This effect is only attainable by great ease of outline and variety of color; peculiarities which, as will be presently seen, the Westmoreland cottage possesses in a supereminent degree.

50. Another feeling, with which one is impressed during a mountain ramble, is humility. I found fault with the insignificance of the Swiss cottage, because "it was not content to sink into a quiet corner, and personify humility." Now, had it not been seen to be pretending, it would not have been felt to be insignificant; for the feelings would have been gratified with its submission to, and retirement from, the majesty of the destructive influences which it rather seemed to rise up against in mockery. Such pretension is especially to be avoided in the mountain cottage: it can never lie too humbly in the pastures of the valley, nor shrink too submissively into the hollows of the hills; it should seem to be asking the storm for mercy, and the mountain for protection: and should appear to owe to its weakness, rather than to its strength, that it is neither overwhelmed by the one, nor crushed by the other.

51. Such are the chief attributes, without which a mountain cottage cannot be said to be beautiful. It may possess others, which are desirable or objectionable, according to their situation, or other accidental circumstances. The nature of these will be best understood by examining an individual building. The material is, of course, what is most easily attainable and available without much labor. The

Cumberland and Westmoreland hills are, in general, composed of clay-slate and gray-wacke, with occasional masses of chert * (like that which forms the summit of Seawfell), porphyritic greenstone, and syenite. The chert decomposes deeply, and assumes a rough brown granular surface, deeply worn and furrowed. The clay-slate or gray-wacke, as it is shattered by frost, and carried down by torrents, of course forms itself into irregular flattish masses. The splintery edges of these are in some degree worn off by the action of water; and, slight decomposition taking place on the surface of the clay-slate, furnishes an aluminous soil, which is immediately taken advantage of by innumerable lichens, which change the dark gray of the original substance into an infinite variety of pale and warm colors. These stones, thus shaped to his hand, are the most convenient building materials the peasant can obtain.† He lays his foundation and strengthens his angles with large masses, filling up the intervals with pieces of a more moderate size; and using here and there a little cement to bind the whole together, and to keep the wind from getting through the interstices; but never enough to fill them altogether up, or to render the face of the wall smooth. At intervals of from 4 ft. to 6 ft. a horizontal line of flat and broad fragments is introduced projecting about a foot from the wall. Whether this is supposed to give strength, I know not; but as it is invariably covered by luxuriant stonecrop, it is always a delightful object.

52. The door is flanked and roofed by three large oblong sheets of gray rock, whose form seems not to be considered of the slightest consequence. Those which form the cheeks of the windows are generally selected with more care from the débris of some rock, which is naturally smooth and polished, after being subjected to the weather, such as granite or syenite. The window itself is narrow and deep set; in the better sort of cottages, latticed, but with no affecta-

[* That is to say, a *flinty* volcanic ash.]

[† Compare the treatment of a similar theme in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv., chaps. viii.-x.]

tion of sweetbrier or eglantine about it. It may be observed of the whole of the cottage, that, though all is beautiful, nothing is pretty. The roof is rather flat, and covered with heavy fragments of the stone of which the walls are built, originally very loose; but generally cemented by accumulated soil, and bound together by houseleek, moss, and stonecrop: brilliant in color, and singular in abundance. The form of the larger cottages, being frequently that of a cross, would hurt the eye by the sharp angles of the roof, were it not for the cushion-like vegetation with which they are rounded and concealed. Varieties of the fern sometimes relieve the massy forms of the stonecrop, with their light and delicate leafage. Windows in the roof are seldom met with. Of the chimney I shall speak hereafter.

53. Such are the prevailing peculiarities of the Westmoreland cottage. "Is this all?" some one will exclaim: "a hovel, built of what first comes to hand, and in the most simple and convenient form; not one thought of architectural beauty ever coming into the builder's head!" Even so; to this illustration of an excellent rule, I wished particularly to direct attention: that the material which Nature furnishes, in any given country, and the form which she suggests, will always render the building the most beautiful, because the most appropriate. Observe how perfectly this cottage fulfills the conditions which were before ascertained to be necessary to perfection. Its color is that of the ground on which it stands, always subdued and gray, but exquisitely rich, the color being disposed crumblingly, in groups of shadowy spots; a deep red brown, passing into black, being finely contrasted with the pale yellow of the *Lichen geographicus*, and the subdued white of another lichen, whose name I do not know; all mingling with each other as on a native rock, and with the same beautiful effect: the mass, consequently, at a distance, tells only as a large stone would, the simplicity of its form contributing still farther to render it inconspicuous. When placed on a mountain-side such a cottage will become a point of interest, which will relieve its monotony, but will

never cut the hill in two, or take away from its size. In the valley, the color of these cottages agrees with everything: the green light, which trembles through the leafage of the taller trees, falls with exquisite effect on the rich gray of the ancient roofs: the deep pool of clear water is not startled from its peace by their reflection; the ivy, or the creepers to which the superior wealth of the peasant of the valley does now and then pretend, in opposition to the general custom, cling gracefully and easily to its innumerable crevices; and rock, lake, and meadow seem to hail it with a brotherly affection, as if Nature had taken as much pains with it as she has with them.

54. Again, observe its ease of outline. There is not a single straight line to be met with from foundation to roof; all is bending or broken. The form of every stone in its walls is a study; for, owing to the infinite delicacy of structure in all minerals, a piece of stone 3 in. in diameter, irregularly fractured, and a little worn by the weather, has precisely the same character of outline which we should find and admire in a mountain of the same material 6000 ft. high; * and, therefore, the eye, though not feeling the cause, rests on every cranny, and crack, and fissure with delight. It is true that we have no idea that every small projection, if of chert, has such an outline as Scawfell's; if of gray-wacke, as Skiddaw's; or if of slate, as Helvellyn's; but their combinations of form are, nevertheless, felt to be exquisite, and we dwell upon every bend of the rough roof and every hollow of the loose wall, feeling it to be a design which no architect on earth could ever equal, sculptured by a chisel of unimaginable delicacy, and finished to a degree of perfection, which is unnoticed only because it is everywhere.

55. This ease and irregularity is peculiarly delightful where gracefulness and freedom of outline and detail are, as they always are in mountain countries, the chief characteristics of every scene. It is well that, where every plant is wild and every torrent free, every field irregular in its form, every knoll various in its outline, one is not

[* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. 18, § 7.

startled by well built walls, or unyielding roofs, but is permitted to trace in the stones of the peasant's dwelling, as in the crags of the mountain side, no evidence of the line or the mallet, but the operation of eternal influences, the presence of an Almighty hand. Another perfection connected with its ease of outline is, its severity of character: there is no foppery about it; not the slightest effort at any kind of ornament, but what nature chooses to bestow; it wears all its decorations wildly, covering its nakedness, not with what the peasant may plant, but with what the winds may bring. There is no gay color or neatness about it; no green shutters or other abomination: all is calm and quiet, and severe, as the mind of a philosopher, and, withal, a little somber. It is evidently old, and has stood many trials in its day; and the snow, and the tempest, and the torrent have all spared it, and left it in its peace, with its gray head unbowed, and its early strength unbroken, even though the spirit of decay seems creeping, like the moss and the lichen, through the darkness of its crannies. This venerable and slightly melancholy character is the very soul of all its beauty.

56. There remains only one point to be noticed, its humility. This was before stated to be desirable, and it will here be found in perfection. The building draws as little attention upon itself as possible; since, with all the praise I have bestowed upon it, it possesses not one point of beauty in which it is not equaled or excelled by every stone at the side of the road. It is small in size, simple in form, subdued in tone, easily concealed or overshadowed; often actually so; and one is always delighted and surprised to find that what courts attention so little is capable of sustaining it so well. Yet it has no appearance of weakness: it is stoutly, though rudely, built; and one ceases to fear for its sake the violence of surrounding agencies, which, it may be seen, will be partly deprecated by its humility.

57. Such is the mountain cottage of Westmoreland; and such, with occasional varieties, are many of the mountain cottages of England and Wales. It is true that my memory

rests with peculiar pleasure in a certain quiet valley near Kirkstone, little known to the general tourist, distant from any public track, and, therefore, free from all the horrors of improvement: * in which it seemed to me that the architecture of the cottage had attained a peculiar degree of perfection. But I think that this impression was rather produced by a few seemingly insignificant accompanying circumstances, than by any distinguished beauty of design in the cottages themselves. Their inhabitants were evidently poor, and apparently had not repaired their dwellings since their first erection; and, certainly, had never torn one tuft of moss or fern from roofs or walls, which were green with the rich vegetation of years. The valley was narrow, and quiet, and deep, and shaded by reverend trees, among whose trunks the gray cottages looked out, with a perfection of effect which I never remember to have seen equaled, though I believe that, in many of the mountain districts of Britain, the peasant's domicile is erected with equal good taste.

58. I have always rejoiced in the thought, that our native highland scenery, though, perhaps, wanting in sublimity, is distinguished by a delicate finish in its details, and by a unanimity and propriety of feeling in the works of its inhabitants, which are elsewhere looked for in vain; and the reason of this is evident. The mind of the inhabitant of the continent, in general, is capable of deeper and finer sensations than that of the islander. It is higher in its aspirations, purer in its passions, wilder in its dreams, and fiercer in its anger; but it is wanting in gentleness, and in its simplicity; naturally desirous of excitement, and incapable of experiencing, in equal degree, the calmer flow of human felicity, the stillness of domestic peace, and the pleasures of the humble hearth, consisting in everyday duties performed, and everyday mercies received; consequently, in the higher walks of architecture, where the mind is to be impressed or elevated, we never have equaled, and we never shall equal, them. It

[* Troutbeck, sixty years since ?]

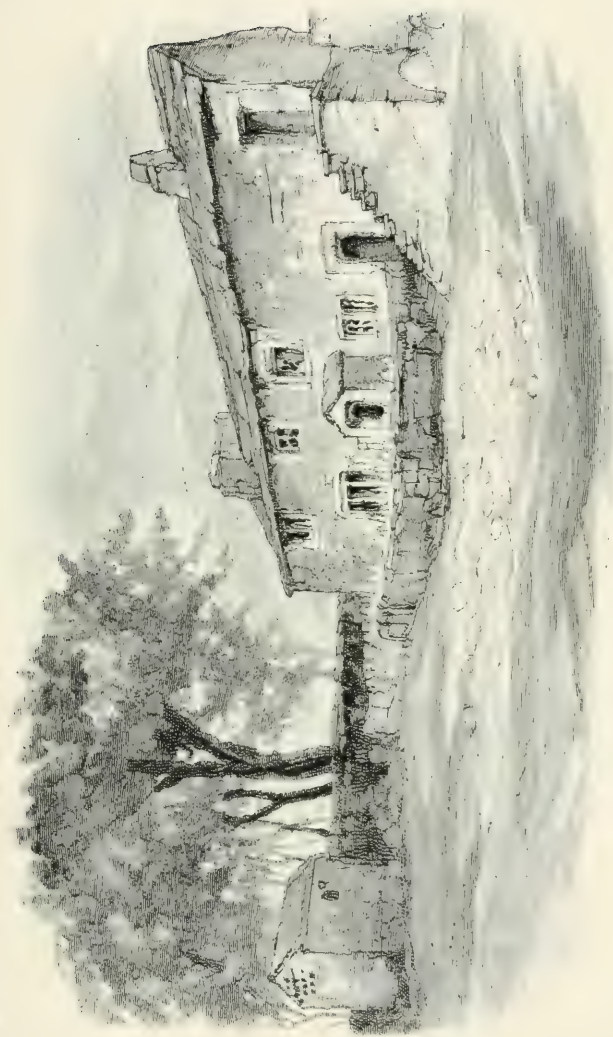


FIG. 6. The Highest House in England.

will be seen hereafter, when we leave the lowly valley for the torn ravine, and the grassy knoll for the ribbed precipice, that, if the continental architects cannot adorn the pasture with the humble roof, they can crest the crag with eternal battlements; * if they cannot minister to a landscape's peace, they can add to its terror; and it has been already seen, that, in the lowland cottages of France and Italy, where high and refined feelings were to be induced, where melancholy was to be excited, or majesty bestowed, the architect was successful, and his labor was perfect: but, now, nothing is required but humility and gentleness; and this, which he does not feel, he cannot give: it is contrary to the whole force of his character, nay, even to the spirit of his religion. It is unfelt even at the time when the soul is most chastened and subdued; for the epitaph on the grave is affected in its sentiment, and the tombstone gaudily gilded, or wreathed with vain flowers.

59. We cannot, then, be surprised at the effort at ornament and other fancied architectural beauties, which injure the effect of the more peaceful mountain scenery abroad; but still less should we be surprised at the perfect propriety which prevails in the same kind of scenery at home; for the error which is there induced by one mental deficiency, is here prevented by another. The uncultivated mountaineer of Cumberland has no taste, and no idea of what architecture means; he never thinks of what is right, or what is beautiful, but he builds what is most adapted to his purposes, and most easily erected: by suiting the building to the uses of his own life, he gives it humility; and, by raising it with the nearest material, adapts it to its situation. This is all that is required, and he has no credit in fulfilling the requirement, since the moment he begins to think of effect, he commits a barbarism by whitewashing the whole. The cottages of Cumberland would suffer much by this piece of improvement, were it not for the salutary operation of mountain rains and mountain winds.

[* This too refers to the unwritten sequel.]

60. So much for the hill dwellings of our own country. I think the examination of the five examples of the cottage which I have given have furnished all the general principles which are important or worthy of consideration; and I shall therefore devote no more time to the contemplation of individual buildings. But, before I leave the cottage altogether, it will be necessary to notice a part of the building which I have in the separate instances purposely avoided mentioning, that I might have the advantage of immediate comparison; a part exceedingly important, and which seems to have been essential to the palace as well as to the cottage, ever since the time when Perdiccas received his significant gift of the sun from his Macedonian master, περιγράφας τὸν ἥλιον, ὃς ἦν κατὰ τὴν καπνοδόκην εἰς τὸν οἶκον εἰσέχων.* And then I shall conclude the subject by a few general remarks on modern ornamental cottages, illustrative of the principle so admirably developed in the beauty of the Westmoreland building; to which, it must be remembered, the palm was assigned, in preference to the Switzer's; not because it was more labored, but because it was more natural.

OXFORD, Jan., 1838.

[* Herodotus viii, 137, freely quoted from memory. The story was that three brothers took service with a kinglet in Macedonia. The queen, who cooked their food herself, for it was in the good old times, noticed that the portion of Perdiccas, the youngest, always "rose" three times as large as any other. The king judged this to be an omen of the lad's coming to fortune; and dismissed them. They demanded their wages. "When the king heard talk about wages—you must know *the sun was shining into the house, down the chimney*—he said (for God had hardened his heart) 'There's your wage; all you deserve and all you'll get;' and pointed to the sunshine. The elder brothers were dumfounded when they heard that; but the lad, who happened to have his knife with him, said, 'We accept, King, the gift.' With his knife he *made a scratch around the sunstreak* on the floor, took the shine of it three times into the fold of his kirtle"—his pocket, we should say nowadays—"and went his way." Eventually he became king of Macedonia, and ancestor of Alexander the Great.]

V.

A CHAPTER ON CHIMNEYS.

61. IT appears from the passage in Herodotus, which we alluded to in the last paper, that there has been a time, even in the most civilized countries, when the king's palace was entirely unfurnished with anything having the slightest pretension to the dignity of chimney tops; and the savory vapors which were wont to rise from the hospitable hearth, at which the queen or princess prepared the feast with the whitest of hands, escaped with indecorous facility through a simple hole in the flat roof. The dignity of smoke, however, is now better understood, and it is dismissed through Gothic pinnacles, and (as at Burleigh House) through Tuscan columns, with a most praiseworthy regard to its comfort and convenience. Let us consider if it is worth the trouble.

62. We advanced a position in the last paper, that silence is never perfect without motion. That is, unless something which might possibly produce sound is evident to the eye, the absence of sound is not surprising to the ear, and, therefore, not impressive. Let it be observed, for instance, how much the stillness of a summer's evening is enhanced by the perception of the gliding and majestic motion of some calm river, strong but still; or of the high and purple clouds; or of the voiceless leaves, among the opening branches. To produce this impression, however, the motion must be uniform, though not necessarily slow. One of the chief peculiarities of the ocean thoroughfares of Venice, is the remarkable silence which rests upon them, enhanced as it is by the swift, but beautifully uniform motion of the gondola. Now, there is no motion more uniform, silent or beautiful

than that of smoke; and, therefore, when we wish the peace or stillness of a scene to be impressive, it is highly useful to draw the attention to it.

63. In the cottage, therefore, a building peculiarly adapted for scenes of peace, the chimney, as conducting the eye to what is agreeable, may be considered as important, and, if well managed, a beautiful accompaniment. But in buildings of a higher class, smoke ceases to be interesting. Owing to their general greater elevation, it is relieved against the sky, instead of against a dark background, thereby losing the fine silvery blue,—which among trees, or rising out of a distant country, is so exquisitely beautiful,—and assuming a dingy yellowish black: its motion becomes useless; for the idea of stillness is no longer desirable, or, at least, no longer attainable, being interrupted by the nature of the building itself: and, finally, the associations it arouses are not dignified; we may think of a comfortable fireside, perhaps, but are quite as likely to dream of kitchens, and spits, and shoulders of mutton. None of these imaginations are in their place, if the character of the building be elevated; they are barely tolerable in the dwelling house and the street. Now, when smoke is objectionable, it is certainly improper to direct attention to the chimney; and, therefore, for two weighty reasons, *decorated* chimneys, of any sort or size whatsoever, are inexcusable barbarisms; first, because, where smoke is beautiful, decoration is unsuited to the building; and secondly, because, where smoke is ugly, decoration directs attention *to its ugliness*.

64. It is unfortunately a prevailing idea with some of our architects, that what is a disagreeable object in itself may be relieved or concealed by lavish ornament; and there never was a greater mistake. It should be a general principle, that what is intrinsically ugly should be utterly destitute of ornament, that the eye may not be drawn to it. The pretended skulls of the three Magi at Cologne are set in gold, and have a diamond in each eye; and are a thousand times more ghastly than if their brown bones had been left in

peace. Such an error as this ought never to be committed in architecture. If any part of the building has disagreeable associations connected with it, let it alone: do not ornament it. Keep it subdued, and simply adapted to its use; and the eye will not go to it, nor quarrel with it. It would have been well if this principle had been kept in view in the renewal of some of the public buildings in Oxford. In All Souls College, for instance, the architect has carried his chimneys half as high as all the rest of the building, and fretted them with Gothic. The eye is instantly caught by the plated candlestick-like columns, and runs with some complacency up the groining and fret-work, and alights finally and fatally on a red chimney-top. He might as well have built a Gothic aisle at an entrance to a coal wharf. We have no scruple in saying that the man who could desecrate the Gothic trefoil into an ornament for a chimney has not the slightest feeling, and never will have any, of its beauty or its use; he was never born to be an architect, and never will be one.

65. Now, if chimneys are not to be decorated (since their existence is necessary), it becomes an object of some importance to know what is to be done with them: and we enter into the inquiry before leaving the cottage, as in its most proper place; because, in the cottage, and only in the cottage, it is desirable to direct attention to smoke.

Speculation, however, on the *beau idéal* of a chimney can never be unshackled; because, though we may imagine what it ought to be, we can never tell, until the house is built, what it *must* be; we may require it to be short, and find that it will smoke, unless it is long; or, we may desire it to be covered, and find it will not go unless it is open. We can fix, therefore, on no one model; but by looking over the chimneys of a few nations, we may deduce some general principles from their varieties, which may always be brought into play, by whatever circumstances our own imaginations may be confined.

66. Looking first to the mind of the people, we cannot

expect to find good examples of the chimney, as we go to the south. The Italian or the Spaniard does not know the use of a chimney, properly speaking; they *have* such things, and they light a fire, five days in the year, chiefly of wood, which does not give smoke enough to teach the chimney its business; but they have not the slightest idea of the meaning or the beauty of such things as hobs, and hearths, and Christmas blazes; and we should, therefore, expect, *à priori*, that there would be no soul in their chimneys; that they would have no practiced substantial air about them; that they would, in short, be as awkward and as much in the way, as individuals of the human race are, when they don't know what to do with themselves, or what they were created for. But in England, sweet carbonaceous England, we flatter ourselves we *do* know something about fire, and smoke too, or our eyes have strangely deceived us; and, from the whole comfortable character and fireside disposition of the nation, we should conjecture that the architecture of the chimney would be understood, both as a matter of taste and as a matter of comfort, to the *ne plus ultra* of perfection. Let us see how far our expectations are realized.

67. Fig. 7, *a*, *b* and *c* are English chimneys. They are distinguishable, we think, at a glance, from all the rest, by a downright serviceableness of appearance, a substantial, unaffected, decent, and chimney-like deportment, in the contemplation of which we experience infinite pleasure and edification, particularly as it seems to us to be strongly contrasted with an appearance, in all the other chimneys, of an indefinable something, only to be expressed by the interesting word "humbug." Fig. 7 *a* is a chimney of Cumberland, and the north of Lancashire. It is, as may be seen at a glance, only applicable at the extremity of the roof, and requires a bent flue. It is built of unhewn stones, in the same manner as the Westmoreland cottages; the flue itself being not one-third the width of the chimney, as is seen at the top, where four flat stones placed on their edges

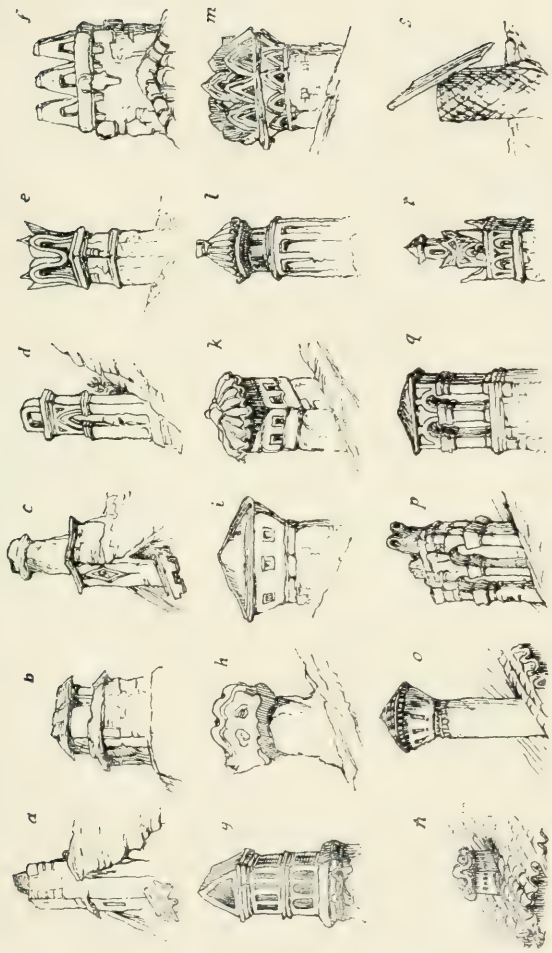


FIG. 7. Chimneys.

form the termination of the flue itself, and give lightness of appearance to the whole. Cover this with a piece of paper, and observe how heavy and square the rest becomes. A few projecting stones continue the line of the roof across the center of the chimney, and two large masses support the projection of the whole, and unite it agreeably with the wall. This is exclusively a cottage chimney; it cannot, and must not, be built of civilized materials; it must be rough, and mossy, and broken; but it is decidedly the best chimney of the whole set. It is simple and substantial, without being cumbrous; it gives great variety to the wall from which it projects, terminates the roof agreeably, and dismisses its smoke with infinite propriety.

68. Fig. *b* is a chimney common over the whole of the north of England; being, as I think, one that will go well in almost any wind, and is applicable at any part of the roof. It is also roughly built, consisting of a roof of loose stones, sometimes one large flat slab, supported above the flue by four large supports, each of a single stone. It is rather light in its appearance, and breaks the ridge of a roof very agreeably. Separately considered, it is badly proportioned; but, as it just equals the height to which a long chimney at the extremity of the building would rise above the roof (as in *a*), it is quite right *in situ*, and would be ungainly if it were higher. The upper part is always dark, owing to the smoke, and tells agreeably against any background seen through the hollow.

69. Fig. *c* is the chimney of the Westmoreland cottage which formed the subject of the last paper. The good taste which prevailed in the rest of the building is not so conspicuous here, because the architect has begun to consider effect instead of utility, and has put a diamond-shaped piece of ornament on the front (usually containing the date of the building), which was not necessary, and looks out of place. He has endeavored to build neatly too, and has bestowed a good deal of plaster on the outside, by all which circumstances the work is infinitely deteriorated. We

have always disliked cylindrical chimneys, probably because they put us in mind of glasshouses and manufactories, for we are aware of no more definite reason; yet this example is endurable, and has a character about it which it would be a pity to lose. Sometimes when the square part is carried down the whole front of the cottage, it looks like the remains of some gray tower, and is not felt to be a chimney at all. Such

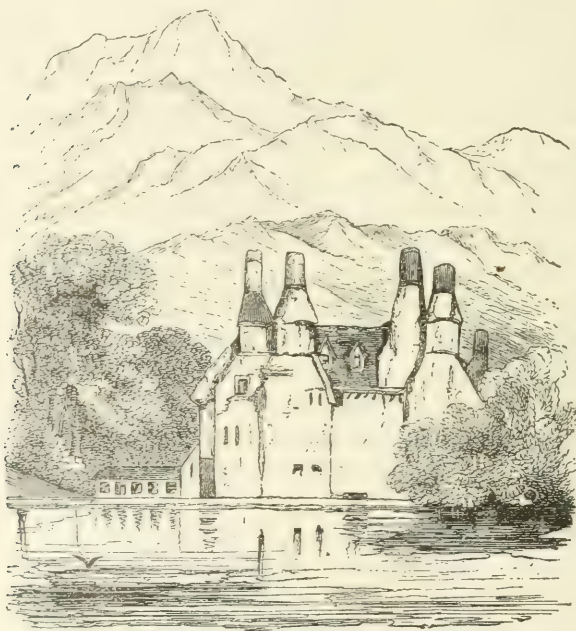


FIG. 8. Coniston Hall, from the Lake near Brantwood (1837).

deceptions are always very dangerous, though in this case sometimes attended with good effect, as in the old building called Coniston Hall, on the shores of Coniston Water, whose distant outline (Fig. 8) is rendered light and picturesque, by the size and shape of its chimneys, which are the same in character as Fig. c.

70. Of English chimneys adapted for buildings of a more

elevated character, we can adduce no good examples. The old red brick mass, which we see in some of our venerable manor-houses, has a great deal of English character about it, and is always agreeable, when the rest of the building is of brick. Fig. *p* is a chimney of this kind: there is nothing remarkable in it; it is to be met with all over England; but we have placed it beside its neighbor *q* to show how the same form and idea are modified by the mind of the nations who employ it. The design is the same in both, the proportions also; but the one is a chimney, the other a paltry model of a paltrier edifice. Fig. *q* is Swiss, and is liable to all the objections advanced against the Swiss cottages: it is a despicable mimicry of a large building, like the tower in the engraving of the Italian cottage (§ 31), carved in stone, it is true, but not the less to be reprobated. Fig. *p*, on the contrary, is adapted to its use, and has no affectation about it. It would be spoiled, however, if built in stone; because the marked bricks tell us the size of the whole at once, and prevent the eye from suspecting any intention to deceive it with a mockery of arches and columns, the imitation of which would be too perfect in stone; and therefore, even in this case, we have failed in discovering a chimney adapted to the higher class of edifices.

71. Fig. *d* is a Netherland chimney, *e* and *f* German. Fig. *d* belongs to an old Gothic building in Malines, and is a good example of the application of the same lines to the chimney which occur in other parts of the edifice, without bestowing any false elevation of character. It is roughly carved in stone, projecting at its base grotesquely from the roof, and covered at the top. The pointed arch, by which its character is given, prevents it from breaking in upon the lines of the rest of the building, and, therefore, in reality renders it less conspicuous than it would otherwise have been. We should never have noticed its existence, had we not been looking out for chimneys.

72. Fig. *e* is also carved in stone, and where there is much variety of architecture, or where the buildings are

grotesque, would be a good chimney, for the very simple reason, that it resembles nothing but a chimney, and its lines are graceful. Fig. *f*, though ugly in the abstract, might be used with effect in situations where perfect simplicity would be too conspicuous; but both *e* and *f* are evidently the awkward efforts of a tasteless nation, to produce something original: they have lost the chastity which we admired in *a*, without obtaining the grace and spirit of *l* and *o*. In fact, they are essentially German.

73. Figs. *h* to *m*, inclusive, are Spanish, and have a peculiar character, which would render it quite impossible to employ them out of their own country. Yet they are not decorated chimneys. There is not one fragment of ornament on any of them. All is done by variety of form; and with such variety no fault can be found, because it is necessary to give them the character of the buildings, out of which they rise. For we may observe here, once for all, that character may be given either by form or by decoration, and that where the latter is improper, variety of form is allowable, because the humble associations which render ornament objectionable, also render simplicity of form unnecessary.* We need not then find fault with *fantastic* chimneys, provided they are kept in unison with the rest of the building, and do not draw too much attention.

74. Fig. *h*, according to this rule, is a very good chimney. It is graceful without pretending, and its grotesqueness will suit the buildings round it—we wish we could give them: they are at Cordova.

Figs. *k* and *l* ought to be seen, as they would be in reality, rising brightly up against the deep blue heaven of the south, the azure gleaming through their hollows; unless perchance a slight breath of refined, pure, pale vapor finds its way from time to time out of them into the light air; their tiled caps casting deep shadows on their white

* Elevation of character, as was seen in the Italian cottage, depends upon simplicity of form.

surfaces, and their *tout ensemble* causing no interruption to the feelings excited by the Moresco arches and grotesque dwelling houses with which they would be surrounded; they are sadly spoiled by being cut off at their bases.

75. Figs. *g*, *n*, *o* are Italian. Fig. *g* has only been given, because it is constantly met with among the more modern buildings of Italy. Figs. *n* and *o* are almost the only two varieties of chimneys which are to be found on the old Venetian palaces (whose style is to be traced partly to the Turk, and partly to the Moor). The curved lines of *n* harmonize admirably with those of the roof itself, and its diminutive size leaves the simplicity of form of the large building to which it belongs entirely uninterrupted and uninjured. Fig. *o* is seen perpetually carrying the whiteness of the Venetian marble up into the sky; but it is too tall, and attracts by far too much attention, being conspicuous on the sides of all the canals.

76. Figs. *q*, *r*, *s* are Swiss. Fig. *r* is one specimen of an extensive class of decorated chimneys, met with in the northeastern cantons. It is never large, and consequently having no false elevation of character, and being always seen with eyes which have been prepared for it, by resting on the details of the Swiss cottage, is less disagreeable than might be imagined, but ought never to be imitated. The pyramidal form is generally preserved, but the design is the same in no two examples.

Fig. *s* is a chimney very common in the eastern cantons, the principle of which we never understood. The oblique part moves on a hinge, so as to be capable of covering the chimney like a hat; and the whole is covered with wooden scales, like those of a fish. This chimney sometimes comes in very well among the confused rafters of the mountain cottage, though it is rather too remarkable to be in good taste.

77. It seems then, that out of the eighteen chimneys, which we have noticed, though several possess character, and one or two elegance, only two are to be found fit for imitation; and, of these, one is exclusively a *cottage*

chimney. This is somewhat remarkable and may serve as a proof:—

First, of what we at first asserted, that chimneys which in any way attract notice (and if these had not, we should not have sketched them) were seldom to be imitated; that there are few buildings which require them to be singular, and none which can tolerate them if decorated; and that the architect should always remember that the size and height being by necessity fixed, the form which draws least attention is the best.

78. Secondly, that this inconspicuousness is to be obtained, not by adhering to any model of simplicity, but by taking especial care that the lines of the chimney are no interruption, and its color no contrast, to those of the building to which it belongs. Thus Figs. *h* to *m* would be far more actually remarkable in their natural situation, if they were more simple in their form; for they would interrupt the character of the rich architecture by which they are surrounded. Fig. *d*, rising as it does above an old Gothic window, would have attracted instant attention, had it not been for the occurrence of the same lines in it which prevail beneath it. The form of *n* only assimilates it more closely with the roof on which it stands. But we must not *imitate* chimneys of this kind, for their excellence consists only in their agreement with other details, separated from which they would be objectionable; we can only follow the principle of the design, which appears, from all that we have advanced, to be this: we require, in a good chimney, *the character of the building to which it belongs divested of all its elevation, and its prevailing lines, deprived of all their ornament.*

79. This it is, no doubt, excessively difficult to give; and, in consequence, there are very few cities or edifices in which the chimneys are not objectionable. We must not, therefore, omit to notice the fulfillment of our expectations, founded on English character. The only two chimneys fit for imitation, in the whole eighteen, are English; and we would not infer anything from this, tending to

invalidate the position formerly advanced, that there was no taste in England; but we would adduce it as a farther illustration of the rule, that what is most adapted to its purpose is most beautiful. For that we have no taste, even in chimneys, is sufficiently proved by the roof effects, even of the most ancient, unaffected, and unplastered of our streets, in which the chimneys, instead of assisting in the composition of the groups of roofs, stand out in staring masses of scarlet and black, with foxes and cocks whisking about, like so many little black devils, in the smoke on the top of them, interrupting all repose, annihilating all dignity, and awaking every possible conception which would be picturesque, and every imagination which would be rapturous, to the mind of master-sweeps.

80. On the other hand, though they have not on the Continent the same knowledge of the use and beauty of chimneys in the abstract, they display their usual good taste in grouping, or concealing them; and, whether we find them mingling with the fantastic domiciles of the German, with the rich imaginations of the Spaniard, with the classical remains and creations of the Italian, they are never intrusive or disagreeable; and either assist the grouping, and relieve the horizontality of the lines of the roof, or remain entirely unnoticed and insignificant, smoking their pipes in peace.

81. It is utterly impossible to give rules for the attainment of these effects, since they are the result of a feeling of the proportion and relation of lines, which, if not natural to a person, cannot be acquired, but by long practice and close observation; and it presupposes a power rarely bestowed on an English architect, of setting regularity at defiance, and sometimes comfort out of the question. We could give some particular examples of this grouping; but, as this paper has already swelled to an unusual length, we shall defer them until we come to the consideration of street effects in general. Of the chimney in the abstract, we are afraid we have only said enough to illustrate, without removing, the difficulty of designing it; but we cannot but

think that the general principles which have been deduced, if carefully followed out, would be found useful, if not for the attainment of excellence, at least for the prevention of barbarism.

OXFORD, *Feb.* 10, [1838].

VI.

THE COTTAGE—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

“Nunquam aliud Natura, aliud Sapientia, dicit.”

Juvenal xiv. 321.

82. IT now only remains for us to conclude the subject of the cottage, by a few general remarks on the just application of modern buildings to adorn or vivify natural scenery.

There are, we think, only three cases in which the cottage is considered as an element of architectural, or any other kind of beauty, since it is ordinarily raised by the peasant where he likes, and how he likes; and, therefore, as we have seen, frequently in good taste.

83. I. When a nobleman, or man of fortune, amuses himself with superintending the erection of the domiciles of his domestics. II. When ornamental summer-houses, or mimicries of wigwams, are to be erected as ornamental adjuncts to a prospect which the owner has done all he can to spoil, that it may be worthy of the honor of having him to look at it. III. When the landlord exercises a certain degree of influence over the cottages of his tenants, or the improvements of the neighboring village, so as to induce such a tone of feeling in the new erections as he may think suitable to the situation.

84. In the first of these cases, there is little to be said; for the habitation of the domestic is generally a dependent feature of his master's, and, therefore, to be considered as a part of it. Porters' lodges are also dependent upon, and to be regulated by, the style of the architecture to which they are attached; and they are generally well managed in England, properly united with the gate, and adding to the effect of the entrance.

In the second case, as the act is in itself a barbarism, it would be useless to consider what would be the best mode of perpetrating it.

In the third case, we think it will be useful to apply a few general principles, deduced from positions formerly advanced.

85. All buildings are, of course, to be considered in connection with the country in which they are to be raised. Now, all landscape must possess one out of four distinct characters.

It must be either woody, the green country; cultivated, the blue country; wild, the gray country; or hilly, the brown country.

I. The Woody, or green, Country. By this is to be understood the mixture of park, pasture, and variegated forest, which is only to be seen in temperate climates, and in those parts of a kingdom which have not often changed proprietors, but have remained in unproductive beauty (or at least, furnishing timber only), the garden of the wealthier population. It is to be seen in no other country, perhaps, so well as in England. In other districts, we find extensive masses of black forest, but not the mixture of sunny glade, and various foliage, and dewy sward, which we meet with in the richer park districts of England. This kind of country is always surgy, oceanic, and massy, in its outline: it never affords blue distances, unless seen from a height; and, even then, the nearer groups are large, and draw away the attention from the background. The under soil is kept cool by the shade, and its vegetation rich; so that the prevailing color, except for a few days at the fall of the leaf, is a fresh green. A good example of this kind of country is the view from Richmond Hill.

86. Now, first, let us consider what sort of feeling this green country excites; and, in order to do so, be it observed, that anything which is apparently enduring and unchangeable gives us an impression rather of future, than of past, duration of existence; but anything which being perishable, and

from its nature subject to change, has yet existed to a great age, gives us an impression of antiquity, though, of course, none of stability. A mountain, for instance (not geologically speaking, for then the furrows on its brow give it age as visible as was ever wrinkled on human forehead, but considering it as it appears to ordinary eyes), appears to be beyond the influence of change: it does not put us in mind of its past existence, by showing us any of the effect of time upon itself; we do not feel that it is old, because it is not approaching any kind of death; it is a mass of unsentient undecaying matter, which, if we think about it, we discover must have existed for some time, but which does not tell this fact to our feelings, or, rather, which tells us of no time at which it came into existence; and therefore, gives us no standard by which to measure its age, which, unless measured, cannot be distinctly felt. But a very old forest tree is a thing subject to the same laws of nature as ourselves: it is an energetic being, liable to an approaching death; its age is written on every spray; and, because we see it is susceptible of life and annihilation, like our own, we imagine it must be capable of the same feelings, and possess the same faculties, and, above all others, memory: it is always telling us about the past, never pointing to the future; we appeal to it, as to a thing which has seen and felt during a life similar to our own, though of ten times its duration, and therefore receive from it a perpetual impression of antiquity. So again a ruined town gives us an impression of antiquity; the stones of which it is built, none; for their age is not written upon them.

87. This being the case, it is evident that the chief feeling induced by woody country is one of reverence for its antiquity. There is a quiet melancholy about the decay of the patriarchal trunks, which is enhanced by the green and elastic vigor of the young saplings; the noble form of the forest aisles, and the subdued light which penetrates their entangled boughs, combine to add to the impression; and the whole character of the scene is calculated to excite

conservative feeling. The man who could remain a radical in a wood country is a disgrace to his species.

88. Now, this feeling of mixed melancholy and veneration is the one of all others which the modern cottage must not be allowed to violate. It may be fantastic or rich in detail; for the one character will make it look old-fashioned, and the other will assimilate with the intertwining of leaf and bough around it: but it must not be spruce, or natty, or very bright in color; and the older it looks the better.

A little grotesqueness in form is the more allowable, because the imagination is naturally active in the obscure and indefinite daylight of wood scenery; conjures up innumerable beings, of every size and shape, to people its alleys and smile through its thickets; and is by no means displeased to find some of its inventions half-realized in a decorated panel or grinning extremity of a rafter.

89. These characters being kept in view, as objects to be attained, the remaining considerations are technical.

For the form. Select any well-grown group of the tree which prevails most near the proposed site of the cottage. Its summit will be a rounded mass. Take the three principal points of its curve: namely, its apex and the two points where it unites itself with neighboring masses. Strike a circle through these three points; and the angle contained in the segment cut off by a line joining the two lower points is to be the angle of the cottage roof. (Of course we are not thinking of interior convenience: the architect must establish his mode of beauty first, and then approach it as nearly as he can.) This angle will generally be very obtuse; and this is one reason why the Swiss cottage is always beautiful when it is set among walnut or chestnut trees. Its obtuse roof is just about the true angle. With pines or larches, the angle should not be regulated by the form of the tree, but by the slope of the branches. The building itself should be low and long, so that, if possible, it may not be seen all at once, but may be partially concealed by trunks or leafage at various distances.

90. For the color, that of wood is always beautiful. If the wood of the near trees be used, so much the better; but the timbers should be rough-hewn, and allowed to get weather-stained. Cold colors will not suit with green; and, therefore, slated roofs are disagreeable, unless, as in the Westmoreland cottage, the gray roof is warmed with lichenous vegetation, when it will do well with anything; but thatch is better. If the building be not of wood, the walls may be built of anything which will give them a quiet and unobtruding warmth of tone. White, if in shade, is sometimes allowable; but, if visible at any point more than 200 yards off, it will spoil the whole landscape. In general, as we saw before, the building will bear some fantastic finishing, that is, if it be entangled in forest; but, if among massive groups of trees, separated by smooth sward, it must be kept simple.

91. II. The Cultivated, or blue, Country. This is the rich champaign land, in which large trees are more sparingly scattered, and which is chiefly devoted to the purposes of agriculture. In this we are perpetually getting blue distances from the slightest elevation, which are rendered more decidedly so by their contrast with warm corn or plowed fields in the foreground. Such is the greater part of England. The view from the hills of Malvern is a good example. In districts of this kind, all is change; one year's crop has no memory of its predecessor; all is activity, prosperity, and usefulness: nothing is left to the imagination; there is no obscurity, no poetry, no nonsense: the colors of the landscape are bright and varied; it is thickly populated, and glowing with animal life. Here, then, the character of the cottage must be cheerfulness; its colors may be vivid: white is always beautiful; even red tiles are allowable, and red bricks durable. Neatness will not spoil it: the angle of its roof may be acute, its windows sparkling, and its roses red and abundant; but it must not be ornamented nor fantastic, it must be evidently built for the uses of common life, and have a matter-of-fact business-like air about it. Its out-

houses, and pigsties, and dunghills should therefore, be kept in sight: the latter may be made very pretty objects, by twisting them with the pitchfork, and plaiting them into braids, as the Swiss do.

92. III. The Wild, or gray, Country. "Wild" is not exactly a correct epithet; we mean wide, uninclosed, treeless undulations of land, whether cultivated or not. The greater part of northern France, though well brought under the plow, would come under the denomination of gray country. Occasional masses of monotonous forest do not destroy this character. Here, size is desirable, and massiness of form; but we must have no brightness of color in the cottage, otherwise it would draw the eye to it at three miles off, and the whole landscape would be covered with conspicuous dots. White is agreeable, if sobered down; slate allowable on the roof as well as thatch. For the rest, we need only refer to the remarks made on the propriety of the French cottage.

93. Lastly, Hill, or brown, Country. And here if we look to England alone, as peculiarly a cottage country, the remarks formerly advanced, in the consideration of the Westmoreland cottage, are sufficient; but if we go into mountain districts of more varied character, we shall find a difference existing between every range of hills, which will demand a corresponding difference in the style of their cottages. The principles, however, are the same in all situations, and it would be a hopeless task to endeavor to give more than general principles. In hill country, however, another question is introduced, whose investigation is peculiarly necessary in cases in which the ground has inequality of surface, that of position. And the difficulty here is, not so much to ascertain where the building ought to be, as to put it there, without suggesting any inquiry as to the mode in which it got there; to prevent its just application from appearing artificial. But we cannot enter into this inquiry, before laying down a number of principles of composition, which are applicable, not only to cottages, but generally; and which we cannot

deduce until we come to the consideration of buildings in groups.

94. Such are the great divisions under which country and rural buildings may be comprehended; but there are intermediate conditions, in which modified forms of the cottage are applicable; and it frequently happens that country which, considered in the abstract, would fall under one of these classes, possesses, owing to its peculiar climate or associations, a very different character. Italy, for instance, is blue country; yet it has not the least resemblance to English blue country. We have paid particular attention to wood; first, because we had not, in any previous paper, considered what was beautiful in a forest cottage; and secondly, because in such districts there is generally much more influence exercised by proprietors over their tenantry, than in populous and cultivated districts; and our English park scenery, though exquisitely beautiful, is sometimes, we think, a little monotonous, from the want of this very feature.

95. And now, farewell to the cottage, and, with it, to the humility of natural scenery. We are sorry to leave it; not that we have any idea of living in a cottage, as a comfortable thing; not that we prefer mud to marble, or deal to mahogany; but that, with it, we leave much of what is most beautiful of earth, the low and bee-inhabited scenery, which is full of quiet and prideless emotion, of such calmness as we can imagine prevailing over our earth when it was new in heaven. We are going into higher walks of architecture, where we shall find a less close connection established between the building and the soil on which it stands, or the air with which it is surrounded, but a closer connection with the character of its inhabitant. We shall have less to do with natural feeling, and more with human passion; we are coming out of stillness into turbulence, out of seclusion into the multitude, out of the wilderness into the world.

PART II.

The Villa.

THE MOUNTAIN VILLA: LAGO DI COMO:

THE LOWLAND VILLA:—ENGLAND:

THE BRITISH VILLA: PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

I.

THE MOUNTAIN VILLA—LAGO DI COMO.

96. IN all arts or sciences, before we can determine what is just or beautiful in a group, we must ascertain what is desirable in the parts which compose it, separately considered; and therefore it will be most advantageous in the present case, to keep out of the village and the city, until we have searched hill and dale for examples of isolated buildings. This mode of considering the subject is also agreeable to the feelings, as the transition from the higher orders of solitary edifices, to groups of associated edifices, is not so sudden or startling, as that from nature's most humble peace, to man's most turbulent pride.

We have contemplated the rural dwelling of the peasant; let us next consider the ruralized domicile of the gentleman: and here, as before, we shall first determine what is theoretically beautiful, and then observe how far our expectations are fulfilled in individual buildings. But a few preliminary observations are necessary.

97. Man, the peasant, is a being of more marked national character, than man, the educated and refined. For nationality is founded, in a great degree, on prejudices and feelings inculcated and aroused in youth, which grow inveterate in the mind as long as its views are confined to the place of its birth; its ideas molded by the customs of its country, and its conversation limited to a circle composed of individuals of habits and feelings like its own; but which are gradually softened down, and eradicated, when the mind is led into general views of things, when it is guided by reflection instead of habit, and has begun to lay aside opinions contracted

under the influence of association and prepossession, substituting in their room philosophical deductions from the calm contemplation of the various tempers, and thoughts, and customs, of mankind. The love of its country will remain with undiminished strength in the cultivated mind, but the national modes of thinking will vanish from the disciplined intellect.

98. Now as it is only by these mannerisms of thought that architecture is affected, we shall find that, the more polished the mind of its designer, the less national will be the building; for its architect will be led away by a search after a model of ideal beauty, and will not be involuntarily guided by deep-rooted feelings, governing irresistibly his heart and hand. He will therefore be in perpetual danger of forgetting the necessary unison of scene and climate, and, following up the chase of the ideal, will neglect the beauty of the natural; an error which he could not commit, were he less general in his views, for then the prejudices to which he would be subject, would be as truly in unison with the objects which created them, as answering notes with the chords which awaken them. We must not, therefore, be surprised, if buildings bearing impress of the exercise of fine thought and high talent in their design, should yet offend us by perpetual discords with scene and climate; and if, therefore, we sometimes derive less instruction, and less pleasure from the columnar portico of the Palace, than from the latched door of the Cottage.

99. Again: man, in his hours of relaxation, when he is engaged in the pursuit of mere pleasure, is less national than when he is under the influence of any of the more violent feelings which agitate everyday life. The reason of this may at first appear somewhat obscure, but it will become evident, on a little reflection. Aristotle's definition of pleasure, perhaps the best ever given, is "an agitation, and settling of the spirit into its own proper nature;" similar, by the by, to the giving of liberty of motion to the molecules of a mineral, followed by their crystallization, into their own proper

form. Now this “proper nature,” *ἐπαρχουσαν φύσιν*, is not the acquired national habit, but the common and universal constitution of the human soul. This constitution is kept under by the feelings which prompt to action, for those feelings depend upon parts of character, or of prejudice, which are peculiar to individuals or to nations; and the pleasure which all men seek is a kind of partial casting away of these more active feelings, to return to the calm and unchanging constitution of mind which is the same in all.

100. We shall, therefore, find that man, in the business of his life, in religion, war, or ambition, is national, but in relaxation he manifests a nature common to every individual of his race. A Turk, for instance, and an English farmer, smoking their evening pipes, differ only in so much as the one has a mouthpiece of amber, and the other one of sealing wax; the one has a turban on his head, and the other a night-cap; they are the same in feeling, and to all intents and purposes the same men. But a Turkish janissary and an English grenadier differ widely in all their modes of thinking, feeling, and acting; they are strictly national. So again, a Tyrolese evening dance, though the costume, and the step, and the music may be different, is the same in feeling as that of the Parisian guinguette; but follow the Tyrolese into their temples, and their deep devotion and beautiful though superstitious reverence will be found very different from any feeling exhibited during a mass in Notre-Dame. This being the case, it is a direct consequence, that we shall find much nationality in the Church or the Fortress, or in any building devoted to the purposes of active life, but very little in that which is dedicated exclusively to relaxation, the Villa. We shall be compelled to seek out nations of very strong feeling and imaginative disposition, or we shall find no correspondence whatever between their character, and that of their buildings devoted to pleasure.

101. In our own country, for instance, there is not the slightest. Beginning at the head of Windermere, and running down its border for about six miles, there are six impor-

tant gentlemen's seats, villas they may be called; the first of which is a square white mass, decorated with pilasters of no order, set in a green avenue, sloping down to the water; the second is an imitation, we suppose, of something possessing theoretical existence in Switzerland, with sharp gable ends, and wooden flourishes turning the corners, set on a little dumpy mound with a slate wall running all round it, glittering with iron pyrites; the third is a blue dark-looking box, squeezed up into a group of straggly larches, with a bog in front of it; the fourth is a cream-colored domicile, in a large park, rather quiet and unaffected, the best of the four, though that is not saying much; the fifth is an old-fashioned thing, formal, and narrow-windowed, yet gray in its tone, and quiet, and not to be maligned; and the sixth is a nondescript, circular, putty-colored habitation, with a leaden dome on the top of it.

102. If, however, instead of taking Windermere, we trace the shore of the Lago di Como, we shall find some expression and nationality; and there, therefore, will we go, to return, however, to England, when we have obtained some data by which to judge of her more fortunate edifices. We notice the mountain villa first, for two reasons; because effect is always more considered in its erection, than when it is to be situated in a less interesting country, and because the effect desired is very rarely given, there being far greater difficulties to contend with. But one word more, before setting off for the south. Though, as we saw before, the gentleman has less *national* character than the boor, his *individual* character is more marked, especially in its finer features, which are clearly and perfectly developed by education; consequently, when the inhabitant of the villa has had anything to do with its erection, we might expect to find indications of individual and peculiar feelings, which it would be most interesting to follow out. But this is no part of our present task; at some future period we hope to give a series of essays on the habitations of the most distinguished men of Europe, showing how the alterations which they directed, and the expression which

they bestowed, corresponded with the turn of their emotions, and leading intellectual faculties: but at present we have to deal only with generalities; we have to ascertain not what will be pleasing to a single mind, but what will afford gratification to every eye possessing a certain degree of experience, and every mind endowed with a certain degree of taste.

103. Without further preface, therefore, let us endeavor to ascertain what would be theoretically beautiful, on the shore, or among the scenery of the Larian Lake, preparatory to a sketch of the general features of those villas which exist there, in too great a multitude to admit, on our part, of much individual detail.

For the general tone of the scenery, we may refer to the paper on the Italian cottage; for the shores of the Lake of Como have generally the character there described, with a little more cheerfulness, and a little less elevation,* but

* That Italian mountain scenery has less elevation of character than the plains may appear singular; but there are many simple reasons for a fact which, we doubt not, has been felt by every one (capable of feeling anything), who ever left the Alps to pass into Lombardy. The first is, that a mountain scene, as we saw in the last paper, bears no traces of decay, since it never possessed any of life. The desolation of the sterile peaks, never having been interrupted, is altogether free from the melancholy which is consequent on the passing away of interruption. They stood up in the time of Italy's glory, into the voiceless air, while all the life and light which she remembers now was working and moving at their feet, an animated cloud, which they did not feel, and do not miss. That region of life never reached up their flanks, and has left them no memorials of its being; they have no associations, no monuments, no memories; we look on them as we would on other hills; things of abstract and natural magnificence, which the presence of man could not increase, nor his departure sadden. They are, in consequence, destitute of all that renders the name of Ausonia thrilling, or her champaigns beautiful, beyond the mere splendor of climate; and even that splendor is unshared by the mountain; its cold atmosphere being undistinguished by any of that rich, purple, ethereal transparency which gives the air of the plains its *depth of feeling*,—we can find no better expression.

Secondly. In all hill scenery, though there is increase of size, there is want of distance. We are not speaking of views from summits, but of the average aspect of valleys. Suppose the mountains be 10,000 feet high, their summit will not be more than six miles distant in a direct line:

aided by great variety of form. They are not quite so rich in vegetation as the plains: both because the soil is scanty, there being, of course, no decomposition going on among the ~~and~~ there is a general sense of confinement, induced by their wall-like boundaries, which is painful, contrasted with the wide exaltation of spirit induced by a distant view over plains. In ordinary countries, however, where the plain is an uninteresting mass of cultivation, the sublimity of distance is not to be compared to that of size: but, where every yard of the cultivated country has its tale to tell; where it is perpetually intersected by rivers whose names are meaning music, and glancing with cities and villages every one of which has its own halo round its head; and where the eye is carried by the clearness of the air over the blue of the farthest horizon, without finding one wreath of mist, or one shadowy cloud, to check the distinctness of the impression; the mental emotions excited are richer, and deeper, and swifter than could be awakened by the noblest hills of the earth, unconnected with the deeds of men.

Lastly. The plain country of Italy has not even to choose between the glory of distance and of size, for it has both. I do not think there is a spot, from Venice to Messina, where two ranges of mountain, at the least, are not in sight at the same time. In Lombardy, the Alps are on one side, the Apennines on the other; in the Venetian territory, the Alps, Apennines and Euganean hills; going southward, the Apennines always, their outworks running far towards the sea, and the coast itself frequently mountainous. Now, the aspect of a noble range of hills, at a considerable distance, is, in our opinion, far more imposing (considered in the abstract) than they are, seen near: their height is better told, their outlines softer and more melodious, their majesty more mysterious. But, in Italy, they gain more by distance than majesty: they gain life. They cease to be the cold forgetful things they were; they hold the noble plains in their lap, and become venerable, as having looked down upon them, and watched over them forever, unchanging; they become part of the picture of associations: we endow them with memory, and then feel them to be possessed of all that is glorious on earth.

For these three reasons, then, the plains of Italy possess far more elevation of character than her hill scenery. To the northward, this contrast is felt very strikingly, as the distinction is well marked, the Alps rising sharply and suddenly. To the southward, the plain is more mingled with low projecting promontories, and unites almost every kind of beauty. However, even among her northern lakes, the richness of the low climate, and the magnificence of form and color presented by the distant Alps, raise the character of the scene immeasurably above that of most hill landscapes, even were those natural features entirely unassisted by associations which, though more sparingly scattered than in the south, are sufficient to give light to every leaf, and voice to every wave.

rocks of black marble which form the greater part of the shore; and because the mountains rise steeply from the water, leaving only a narrow zone at their bases in the climate of Italy. In that zone, however, the olive grows in great luxuriance, with the cypress, orange, aloe, myrtle, and vine, the latter always trellised.

104. Now, as to the situation of the cottage, we have already seen that great humility was necessary, both in the building and its site, to prevent it from offending us by an apparent struggle with forces, compared with which its strength was dust: but we cannot have this extreme humility in the villa, the dwelling of wealth and power, and yet we must not, any more, suggest the idea of its resisting natural influences under which the Pyramids could not abide. The only way of solving the difficulty is, to select such sites as shall seem to have been set aside by nature as places of rest, as points of calm and enduring beauty, ordained to sit and smile in their glory of quietness, while the avalanche brands the mountain top,* and the torrent desolates the valley; yet so preserved, not by shelter amidst violence, but by being placed wholly out of the influence of violence. For in this they must differ from the site of the cottage, that the peasant may seek for protection under some low rock or in some narrow dell, but the villa must have a domain to itself, at once conspicuous, beautiful, and calm.

105. As regards the form of the cottage, we have seen how

* There are two kinds of winter avalanches; the one, sheets of frozen snow sliding on the surface of others. The swiftness of these, as the clavendier of the Convent of St. Bernard told me, he could compare to nothing but that of a cannon ball of equal size. The other is a rolling mass of snow, accumulating in its descent. This, grazing the bare hill-side, tears up its surface like dust, bringing away soil, rock, and vegetation, as a grazing ball tears flesh; and leaving its withered path distinct on the green hill-side, as if the mountain had been branded with red-hot iron. They generally keep to the same paths; but when the snow accumulates, and sends one down the wrong way, it has been known to cut down a pine forest, as a scythe mows grass. The tale of its work is well told by the seared and branded marks on the hill summits and sides.

the Westmoreland cottage harmonized with the ease of outline so conspicuous in hill scenery, by the irregularity of its details; but, here, no such irregularity is allowable or consistent, and is not even desirable. For the cottage enhances the wildness of the surrounding scene, by sympathizing with it; the villa must do the same thing, by contrasting with it. The eye feels, in a far greater degree, the terror of the distant and desolate peaks, when it passes down their ravined sides to sloping and verdant hills, and is guided from these to the rich glow of vegetable life in the low zones, and through this glow to the tall front of some noble edifice, peaceful even in its pride. But this contrast must not be sudden, or it will be startling and harsh; and therefore, as we saw above, the villa must be placed where all the severe features of the scene, though not concealed, are distant, and where there is a gradation, so to speak, of impressions, from terror to loveliness, the one softened by distance, the other elevated in its style: and the form of the villa must not be fantastic or angular, but must be full of variety, so tempered by simplicity as to obtain ease of outline united with elevation of character; the first being necessary for reasons before advanced, and the second, that the whole may harmonize with the feelings induced by the lofty features of the accompanying scenery in any hill country, and yet more, on the Larian Lake, by the deep memories and everlasting associations which haunt the stillness of its shore. Of the color required by Italian landscape we have spoken before, and we shall see that, particularly in this case, white or pale tones are agreeable.

106. We shall now proceed to the situation and form of the villa. As regards situation; the villas of the Lago di Como are built, *par préférence*, either on jutting promontories of low crag covered with olives, or on those parts of the shore where some mountain stream has carried out a bank of alluvium into the lake. One object proposed in this choice of situation is, to catch the breeze as it comes up the main opening of the hills, and to avoid the reflection of the sun's rays from the rocks of the actual shore; and another is, to ob-

tain a prospect up or down the lake, and of the hills on whose projection the villa is built: but the effect of this choice when the building is considered the object, is to carry it exactly into the place where it ought to be, far from the steep precipice and dark mountain, to the border of the winding bay and citron-scented cape, where it stands at once conspicuous and in peace. For instance, in the view of Villa Serbelloni * from across the lake, although the eye falls suddenly from the crags above to the promontory below, yet all the sublime and severe features of the scene are kept in the distance, and the villa itself is mingled with graceful lines, and enbosomed in rich vegetation. The promontory separates the Lake of Lecco from that of Como, properly so-called, and is three miles from the opposite shore, which gives room enough for aërial perspective.

107. We shall now consider the form of the villa. It is generally the apex of a series of artificial terraces, which conduct through its gardens to the water. These are formal in their design, but extensive, wide, and majestic in their slope, the steps being generally about $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high and $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide (sometimes however much deeper). They are generally supported by white wall, strengthened by unfilled arches, the angles being turned by sculptured pedestals, surmounted by statues, or urns. Along the terraces are carried rows, sometimes of cypress, more frequently of orange or lemon trees, with myrtles, sweet bay, and aloes, intermingled, but always with dark and spiry cypresses occurring in groups; and attached to these terraces, or to the villa itself, are series of arched grottoes built (or sometimes cut in the rock) for cool-

[* Villa Serbelloni, now the dépendence of the Hôtel Grande Bretagne at Bellaggio, and Villa Somma-Riva, now called Villa Carlotta, at Cadenabbia, and visited by every tourist for its collection of modern statuary, are both too well known to need illustration by the very poor wood-cuts which accompanied this chapter in the "Architectural Magazine." The original drawings are lost; judging from that of the cottage in Val d'Aosta we may safely believe that they were most inadequately represented by the old cuts.]

ness, frequently overhanging the water, kept dark and fresh, and altogether delicious to the feelings. A good instance of these united peculiarities is seen in Villa Somma-Riva, Lago di Como.

The effect of these approaches is disputable. It is displeasing to many, from its formality; but we are persuaded that it is right, because it is a national style, and therefore has in all probability due connection with scene and character: and this connection we shall endeavor to prove.

108. The frequent occurrence of the arch is always delightful in distant effect, partly on account of its graceful line, partly because the shade it casts is varied in depth, becoming deeper and deeper as the grotto retires, and partly because it gives great apparent elevation to the walls which it supports. The grottoes themselves are agreeable objects seen near, because they give an impression of coolness to the eye; and they echo all sounds with great melody; small streams are often conducted through them, occasioning slight breezes by their motion. Then the statue and the urn are graceful in their outline, classical in their meaning, and correct in their position, for where could they be more appropriate than here; the one ministering to memory, and the other to mourning. The terraces themselves are dignified in their character (a necessary effect, as we saw above), and even the formal rows of trees are right in this climate, for a peculiar reason. Effect is always to be considered, in Italy, as if the sun were always to shine, for it does nine days out of ten. Now the shadows of foliage regularly disposed, fall with a grace which it is impossible to describe, running up and down across the marble steps, and casting alternate statues into darkness; and checkering the white walls with a "method in their madness," altogether unattainable by loose grouping of trees; and therefore, for the sake of this kind of shade, to which the eye, as well as the feeling, is attracted, the long row of cypresses or orange trees is allowable.

109. But there is a still more important reason for it, of a directly contrary nature to that which its formality would

seem to require. In all beautiful designs of exterior descent, a certain regularity is necessary; the lines should be graceful, but they must balance each other, slope answering to slope, statue to statue. Now this mathematical regularity would hurt the eye excessively in the midst of scenes of natural grace, were it executed in bare stone; but, if we make part of the design itself foliage, and put in touches of regular shade, alternating with the stone, whose distances and darkness are as mathematically limited as the rest of the grouping, but whose nature is changeful and varied in individual forms, we have obtained a link between nature and art, a step of transition, leading the feelings gradually from the beauty of regularity to that of freedom. And this effect would not be obtained, as might at first appear, by intermingling trees of different kinds, at irregular distances, or wherever they chose to grow; for then the design and the foliage would be instantly separated by the eye, the symmetry of the one would be interrupted, the grace of the other lost; the nobility of the design would not be seen, but its formality would be felt; and the wildness of the trees would be injurious, because it would be felt to be out of place. On principles of composition, therefore, the regular disposition of decorative foliage is right, when such foliage is mixed with architecture; but it requires great taste, and long study, to design this disposition properly. Trees of dark leaf and little color should be invariably used, for they are to be considered, it must be remembered, rather as free touches of shade than as trees.

110. Take, for instance, the most simple bit of design, such as a hollow balustrade, and suppose that it is found to look cold or raw, when executed, and to want depth. Then put small pots, with any dark shrub, the darker the better, at fixed places behind them, at the same distance as the balustrades, or between every two or three, and keep them cut down to a certain height, and we have immediate depth and increased ease, with undiminished symmetry. But the great difficulty is to keep the thing within proper limits, since too

much of it will lead to paltriness, as is the case in a slight degree in Isola Bella, on Lago Maggiore; and not to let it run into small details: for, be it remembered, that it is only in the majesty of art, in its large and general effects, that this regularity is allowable; nothing but variety should be studied in detail, and therefore there can be no barbarism greater than the lozenge borders and beds of the French garden. The scenery around must be naturally rich, that its variety of line may relieve the slight stiffness of the architecture itself: and the climate must always be considered; for, as we saw, the chief beauty of these flights of steps depends upon the presence of the sun; and, if they are to be in shade half the year, the dark trees will only make them gloomy, the grass will grow between the stones of the steps, black weeds will flicker from the pedestals, damp mosses discolor the statues and urns, and the whole will become one incongruous ruin, one ridiculous decay. Besides, the very dignity of its character, even could it be kept in proper order, would be out of place in any country but Italy. Busts of Virgil or Ariosto would look astonished in an English snowstorm; statues of Apollo and Diana would be no more divine, where the laurels of the one would be weak, and the crescent of the other would never gleam in pure moonlight. The whole glory of the design consists in its unison with the dignity of the landscape, and with the classical tone of the country. Take it away from its concomitant circumstances, and, instead of conducting the eye to it by a series of lofty and dreamy impressions, bring it through green lanes, or over copse-covered crags, as would be the case in England, and the whole system becomes utterly and absolutely absurd, ugly in outline, worse than useless in application, unmeaning in design, and incongruous in association.

111. It seems, then, that in the approach to the Italian villa, we have discovered great nationality and great beauty, which was more than we could have expected, but a beauty utterly untransferable from its own settled habitation. In our next paper we shall proceed to the building itself, which

will not detain us long, as it is generally simple in its design, and take a general view of villa architecture over Italy.

112. We have bestowed considerable attention on this style of Garden Architecture, because it has been much abused by persons of high authority, and general good taste, who forgot, in their love of grace and ideal beauty, the connection with surrounding circumstances so manifest even in its formality. Eustace, we think, is one of these; and, although it is an error of a kind he is perpetually committing, he is so far right, that this mannerism is frequently carried into excess even in its own peculiar domain, then becoming disagreeable, and is always a dangerous style in inexperienced hands. We think, however, paradoxical as the opinion may appear, that every one who is a true lover of nature, and has been bred in her wild school, will be an admirer of this symmetrical designing, in its place; and will feel, as often as he contemplates it, that the united effect of the wide and noble steps, with the pure water dashing over them like heated crystal, the long shadows of the cypress groves, the golden leaves and glorious light of blossom of the glancing aloes, the pale statues gleaming along the heights in their everlasting death in life, their motionless brows looking down forever on the loveliness in which their beings once dwelt, marble forms of more than mortal grace lightening along the green arcades, amidst dark cool grottoes, full of the voice of dashing waters, and of the breath of myrtle blossoms, with the blue of the deep lake and the distant precipice mingling at every opening with the eternal snows glowing in their noontide silence, is one not unworthy of Italy's most noble remembrances.

II.

THE MOUNTAIN VILLA—LAGO DI COMO (Continued).

113. HAVING considered the propriety of the approach, it remains for us to investigate the nature of the feelings excited by the villas of the Lago di Como in particular, and of Italy in general.

We mentioned that the bases of the mountains bordering the Lake of Como were chiefly composed of black marble; black, at least, when polished, and very dark gray in its general effect. This is very finely stratified in beds varying in thickness from an inch to two or three feet; and these beds, taken of a medium thickness, form flat slabs, easily broken into rectangular fragments, which, being excessively compact in their grain, are admirably adapted for a building material. There is a little pale limestone * among the hills to the south; but this marble, or primitive limestone (for it is not highly crystalline), is not only more easy of access, but a more durable stone. Of this, consequently, almost all the buildings on the lake shore are built; and, therefore, were their material unconcealed, would be of a dark monotonous and melancholy gray tint, equally uninteresting to the eye, and depressing to the mind. To prevent this result, they are covered with dif-

* Pale limestone, with dolomite. A coarse dolomite forms the mass of mountains on the east of Lake Lecco, Monte Campione, etc., and part of the other side, as well as the Monte del Novo, above Cadenabbia; but the bases of the hills, along the *shore* of the Lake of Lecco, and all the mountains on both sides of the lower limb of Como are black limestone. The whole northern half of the lake is bordered by gneiss or mica slate, with tertiary deposit where torrents enter it. So that the dolomite is only obtainable by ascending the hills, and incurring considerable expense of carriage; while the rocks of the shore split into blocks of their own accord, and are otherwise an excellent material.

ferent compositions, sometimes white, more frequently cream-colored, and of varying depth; the moldings and pilasters being frequently of deeper tones than the walls. The insides of the grottoes, however, when not cut in the rock itself, are left uncovered, thus forming a strong contrast with the whiteness outside; giving great depth, and permitting weeds and flowers to root themselves on the roughnesses, and rock streams to distill through the fissures of the dark stones; while all parts of the building to which the eye is drawn, by their form or details (except the capitals of the pilasters), such as the urns, the statues, the steps, or balustrades, are executed in very fine white marble, generally from the quarries of Carrara, which supply quantities of fragments of the finest quality, which nevertheless, owing to their want of size, or to the presence of conspicuous veins, are unavailable for the higher purposes of sculpture.

114. Now, the first question is, is this very pale color desirable? It is to be hoped so, or else the whole of Italy must be pronounced full of impropriety. The first circumstance in its favor is one which, though connected only with lake scenery, we shall notice at length, as it is a point of high importance in our own country. When a small piece of quiet water reposes in a valley, or lies embosomed among crags, its chief beauty is derived from our perception of crystalline depth, united with excessive slumber. In its limited surface we cannot get the sublimity of extent, but we may have the beauty of peace, and the majesty of depth. The object must therefore be, to get the eye off its surface, and to draw it down, to beguile it into that fairy land underneath, which is more beautiful than what it repeats, because it is all full of dreams unattainable, and illimitable. This can only be done by keeping its edge out of sight, and guiding the eye off the land into the reflection, as if it were passing into a mist, until it finds itself swimming into the blue sky, with a thrill of unfathomable falling. (If there be not a touch of sky at the bottom, the water will be disagreeably black, and the clearer the more fearful.) Now, one touch of *white* reflection

of an object at the edge will destroy the whole illusion, for it will come like the flash of light on armor, and will show the surface, not the depth: it will tell the eye whereabouts it is; will define the limit of the edge; and will turn the dream of limitless depth into a small, uninteresting, reposeless piece of water. In all small lakes or pools, therefore, steep borders of dark crag, or of thick foliage, are to be obtained, if possible; even a shingly shore will spoil them: and this was one reason, it will be remembered for our admiration of the color of the Westmoreland cottage, because it never broke the repose of water by its reflection.

115. But this principle applies only to small pieces of water, on which we look down, as much as along the surface. As soon as we get a sheet, even if only a mile across, we lose depth; first, because it is almost impossible to get the surface without a breeze on some part of it; and, again, because we look along it, and get a great deal of sky in the reflection, which, when occupying too much space, tells as mere flat light. But we may have the beauty of extent in a very high degree; and it is therefore desirable to know how far the water goes, that we may have a clear conception of its space. Now, its border, at a great distance, is always lost, unless it be defined by a very distinct line; and such a line is harsh, flat, and cutting on the eye. To avoid this, the border itself should be dark, as in the other case, so that there may be no continuous horizontal line of demarcation; but one or two bright white objects should be set here and there along or near the edge: their reflections will flash on the dark water, and will inform the eye in a moment of the whole distance and transparency of the surface it is traversing. When there is a slight swell on the water, they will come down in long, beautiful, perpendicular lines, mingling exquisitely with the streaky green of reflected foliage; when there is none, they become a distant image of the object they repeat, endowed with infinite repose.

116. These remarks, true of small lakes whose edges are green, apply with far greater force to sheets of water on

which the eye passes over ten or twenty miles in one long glance, and the prevailing color of whose borders is, as we noticed when speaking of the Italian cottage, blue. The white reflections are here excessively valuable, giving space, brilliancy, and transparency; and furnish one very powerful apology, even did other objections render an apology necessary, for the pale tone of the color of the villas, whose reflections, owing to their size and conspicuous situations, always take a considerable part in the scene, and are therefore things to be attentively considered in the erection of such buildings, particularly in a climate whose calmness renders its lakes quiet for the greater part of the day. Nothing, in fact, can be more beautiful than the intermingling of these bright lines with the darkness of the reversed cypresses seen against the deep azure of the distant hills in the crystalline waters of the lake, of which some one aptly says, "Deep within its azure rest, white villages sleep silently;"* or than their columnar perspective, as village after village catches the light, and strikes the image to the very quietest recess of the narrow water, and the very farthest hollow of the folded hills.

117. From all this, it appears that the effect of the white villa in water is delightful. On land it is quite as important, but more doubtful. The first objection, which strikes us instantly when we *imagine* such a building, is the want of repose, the startling glare of effect, induced by its unsubdued tint. But this objection does not strike us when we *see* the building; a circumstance which was partly accounted for before, in speaking of the cottage, and which we shall presently see farther cause not to be surprised at. A more important objection is, that such whiteness destroys a great deal of venerable character, and harmonizes ill with the melancholy tones of surrounding landscape: and this requires detailed consideration.

[* A reminiscence of two lines from a poem on the "Lago di Como" written by the author in 1833.]

118. Paleness of color destroys the majesty of a building; first, by hinting at a disguised and humble material; and, secondly, by taking away all appearance of age. We shall speak of the effect of the material presently; but the deprivation of apparent antiquity is dependent in a great degree on the color; and in Italy, where, as we saw before, everything ought to point to the past, is serious injury, though, for several reasons, not so fatal as might be imagined; for we do not require, in a building raised as a light summer-house, wherein to while away a few pleasure hours, the evidence of ancestral dignity, without which the château or palace can possess hardly any beauty. We know that it is originally built more as a plaything than as a monument; as the delight of an individual, not the possession of a race; and that the very lightness and carelessness of feeling with which such a domicile is entered and inhabited by its first builder would demand, to sympathize and keep in unison with them, not the kind of building adapted to excite the veneration of ages, but that which can most gayly minister to the amusement of hours. For all men desire to have memorials of their actions, but none of their recreations; inasmuch as we only wish that to be remembered which others will not, or cannot perform or experience; and we know that all men can enjoy recreation as much as ourselves. We wish succeeding generations to admire our energy, but not even to be aware of our lassitude; to know when we moved, but not when we rested; how we ruled, not how we condescended; and, therefore, in the case of the triumphal arch, or the hereditary palace, if we are the builders, we desire stability; if the beholders, we are offended with novelty: but in the case of the villa, the builder desires only a correspondence with his humor; the beholder, evidence of such correspondence; for he feels that the villa is most beautiful when it ministers most to pleasure; that it cannot minister to pleasure without perpetual change, so as to suit the varying ideas, and humors, and imaginations of its inhabitant, and that it cannot possess this light and variable habit with any appearance of antiquity.

119. And, for a yet more important reason, such appearance is not desirable. Melancholy, when it is productive of pleasure, is accompanied either by loveliness in the object exciting it, or by a feeling of pride in the mind experiencing it. Without one of these, it becomes absolute pain, which all men throw off as soon as they can, and suffer under as long as their minds are too weak for the effort. Now, when it is accompanied by loveliness in the object exciting it, it forms beauty; when by a feeling of pride, it constitutes the pleasure we experience in tragedy, when we have the pride of endurance, or in contemplating the ruin, or the monument, by which we are informed or reminded of the pride of the past. Hence, it appears that age is beautiful only when it is the decay of glory or of power, and memory only delightful when it reposes upon pride.* All remains therefore of what was merely devoted to pleasure; all evidence of lost enjoyment; all memorials of the recreation and rest of the departed; in a word, all desolation of delight is productive of mere pain, for there is no feeling of exultation connected with it. Thus, in any ancient habitation, we pass with reverence and pleasurable emotion through the ordered armory, where the lances lie, with none to wield; through the lofty hall, where the crested scutcheons glow with the honor of the dead: but we turn sickly away from the arbor which has no hand to tend it, and the boudoir which has no life to lighten it, and the smooth sword which has no light feet to dance on it. So it is in the villa: the more memory, the more sorrow; and, therefore, the less adaptation to its present purpose. But, though cheerful, it should be ethereal in its expression: "spiritual" is a good word, giving ideas of the very highest order of delight that can be obtained in the mere present.

* Observe, we are not speaking of emotions felt on remembering what we ourselves have enjoyed, for then the imagination is productive of pleasure by replacing us in enjoyment, but of the feelings excited in the *indifferent* spectator, by the evident decay of power or desolation of enjoyment, of which the first ennobles, the other only harrows, the spirit.

120. It seems, then, that for all these reasons an appearance of age is not desirable, far less necessary, in the villa; but its existing character must be in unison with its country; and it must appear to be inhabited by one brought up in that country, and imbued with its national feelings. In Italy, especially, though we can even here dispense with one component part of elevation of character,—age, we must have all the others: we must have high feeling, beauty of form, and depth of effect, or the thing will be a barbarism; the inhabitant must be an Italian, full of imagination and emotion: a villa inhabited by an Englishman, no matter how close its imitation of others, will always be preposterous.

We find, therefore, that white is not to be blamed in the villa for destroying its antiquity; neither is it reprehensible, as harmonizing ill with the surrounding landscape: on the contrary, it adds to its brilliancy, without taking away from its depth of tone. We shall consider it as an element of landscape, more particularly, when we come to speak of grouping.

121. There remains only one accusation to be answered; viz., that it hints at a paltry and unsubstantial material: and this leads us to the second question, Is this material allowable? If it were distinctly felt by the eye to be stucco, there could be no question about the matter, it would be decidedly disagreeable; but all the parts to which the eye is attracted are executed in marble, and the stucco merely forms the dead flat of the building, not a single wreath of ornament being formed of it. Its surface is smooth and bright, and altogether avoids what a stone building, when not built of large masses, and uncharged with ornament, always forces upon the attention, the rectangular lines of the blocks, which, however nicely fitted they may be, are “horrible! most horrible!” There is also a great deal of ease and softness in the angular lines of the stucco, which are never sharp or harsh, like those of stone; and it receives shadows with great beauty, a point of infinite importance in this climate; giving them lightness and transparency, without any diminution of depth.

It is also agreeable to the eye, to pass from the sharp carving of the marble decorations to the ease and smoothness of the stucco; while the utter want of interest in those parts which are executed in it prevents the humility of the material from being offensive: for this passage of the eye from the marble to the composition is managed with the dexterity of the artist, who, that the attention may be drawn to the single point of the picture which is his subject, leaves the rest so obscured and slightly painted, that the mind loses it altogether in its attention to the principal feature.

122. With all, however, that can be alleged in extenuation of its faults, it cannot be denied that the stucco *does* take away so much of the dignity of the building, that, unless we find enough bestowed by its form and details to counterbalance, and a great deal more than counterbalance, the deterioration occasioned by tone and material, the whole edifice must be condemned, as incongruous with the spirit of the climate, and even with the character of its own gardens and approach. It remains, therefore, to notice the details themselves. Its form is simple to a degree; the roof generally quite flat, so as to leave the mass in the form of a parallelo-piped, in general without wings or adjuncts of any sort. Villa Somma-Riva [Carlotta] is a good example of this general form and proportion, though it has an arched passage on each side, which takes away from its massiness. This excessive weight of effect would be injurious, if the building were set by itself; but, as it always forms the apex of a series of complicated terraces, it both relieves them and gains great dignity by its own unbroken simplicity of size. This general effect of form is not injured, when, as is often the case, an open passage is left in the center of the building, under tall and well-proportioned arches, supported by pilasters (never by columns). Villa Porro, Lago di Como, is a good example of this method. The arches hardly ever exceed three in number, and these are all of the same size, so that the crowns of the arches continue the horizontal lines of the rest of the building. Were the center one higher than the others, these

lines would be interrupted, and a great deal of simplicity lost. The covered space under these arches is a delightful, shaded, and breezy retreat in the heat of the day; and the entrance doors usually open into it, so that a current of cool air is obtainable by throwing them open.

123. The building itself consists of three floors: we remember no instance of a greater number, and only one or two of fewer. It is, in general, crowned with a light balustrade, surmounted by statues at intervals. The windows of the uppermost floor are usually square, often without any architrave. Those of the principal floor are surrounded with broad architraves, but are frequently destitute of frieze or cornice. They have usually flat bands at the bottom, and their aperture is a double square. Their recess is very deep, so as not to let the sun fall far into the interior. The interval between them is very variable. In some of the villas of highest pretensions, such as those on the banks of the Brenta, that of Isola Bella, and others, which do not face the south, it is not much more than the breadth of the two architraves, so that the rooms within are filled with light. When this is the case, the windows have friezes and cornices. But, when the building fronts the south, the interval is often very great, as in the case of the Villa Porro. The ground-floor windows are frequently set in tall arches, supported on deeply engaged pilasters as in the Villa Somma-Riva. The door is not large, and never entered by high steps, as it generally opens on a terrace of considerable height, or on a wide landing-place at the head of a flight of fifty or sixty steps descending through the gardens.

124. Now, it will be observed, that, in these general forms, though there is no splendor, there is great dignity. The lines throughout are simple to a degree, entirely uninterrupted by decorations of any kind, so that the beauty of their proportions is left visible and evident. We shall see hereafter that ornament in Grecian architecture, while, when well managed, it always adds to its grace, invariably takes away from its majesty; and that these two attributes never can exist to-

gether in their highest degrees. By the utter absence of decoration, therefore, the Italian villa, possessing, as it usually does, great beauty of proportion, attains a degree of elevation of character, which impresses the mind in a manner which it finds difficult to account for by any consideration of its simple details or moderate size; while, at the same time, it lays so little claim to the attention, and is so subdued in its character, that it is enabled to occupy a conspicuous place in a landscape, without any appearance of intrusion. The glance of the beholder rises from the labyrinth of terrace and arbor beneath, almost weariedly; it meets, as it ascends, with a gradual increase of bright marble and simple light, and with a proportionate diminution of dark foliage and complicated shadow, till it rests finally on a piece of simple brilliancy, chaste and unpretending, yet singularly dignified; and does not find its color too harsh, because its form is so simple: for color of any kind is only injurious when the eye is too much attracted to it; and, when there is so much quietness of detail as to prevent this misfortune, the building will possess the cheerfulness, without losing the tranquillity, and will seem to have been erected, and to be inhabited, by a mind of that beautiful temperament wherein modesty tempers majesty, and gentleness mingles with rejoicing, which, above all others, is most suited to the essence, and most interwoven with the spirit, of the natural beauty whose peculiar power is invariably repose.

125. So much for its general character. Considered by principles of composition, it will also be found beautiful. Its prevailing lines are horizontal; and every artist knows that, where peaks of any kind are in sight, the lines above which they rise ought to be flat. It has not one acute angle in all its details, and very few intersections of verticals with horizontals; while all that do intersect seem useful as supporting the mass. The just application of the statues at the top is more doubtful, and is considered reprehensible by several high authorities, who, nevertheless, are inconsistent enough to let the balustrade pass uncalumniated, though it is

objectionable on exactly the same grounds; for, if the statues suggest the inquiry of "What are they doing there?" the balustrade compels its beholder to ask, "whom it keeps from tumbling over?"

126. The truth is, that the balustrade and statues derive their origin from a period when there was easy access to the roof of either temple or villa; (that there was such access is proved by a passage in the *Iphigenia Taurica*, line 113, where Orestes speaks of getting up to the triglyphs of a Doric temple as an easy matter;) and when the flat roofs were used, not, perhaps, as an evening promenade, as in Palestine, but as a place of observation, and occasionally of defense. They were composed of large flat slabs of stone (*κέραμος*,*) peculiarly adapted for walking, one or two of which, when taken up, left an opening of easy access into the house, as in Luke v. 19, and were perpetually used in Greece as missile weapons, in the event of a hostile attack or sedition in the city, by parties of old men, women, and children, who used, as a matter of course, to retire to the roof as a place of convenient defense. By such attacks from the roof with the *κέραμος* the Thebans were thrown into confusion in Platea (*Thucydides* ii. 4.) So, also, we find the roof immediately resorted to in the case of the starving of Pausanias in the Temple of Minerva of the Brazen House, and in that of the massacre of the aristocratic party at Coreyra (*Thucydides* iv. 48):—*Ἀναβάντες δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ τέγος τοῦ οἰκήματος, καὶ διελόντες τὴν ὀροφὴν, ἔβαλλον τῷ κεράμῳ.*

127. Now, where the roof was thus a place of frequent resort, there could be no more useful decoration than a balustrade; nor one more appropriate or beautiful than occasional statues in attitudes of watchfulness, expectation, or observa-

* In the large buildings, that is: *κέραμος* also signifies earthen tiling, and sometimes earthenware in general, as in *Herodotus* iii. 6 [where it is used of earthen jars of wine.] It appears that such tiling was frequently used in smaller edifices. The Greeks may have derived their flat roofs from Egypt. Herodotus mentions of the Labyrinth of the Twelve Kings, that *ὁροσὴ δὲ πάντων τοῖτων λιθίνη*, but not as if the circumstance were in the least extraordinary [*Herodotus* ii. 148.]

tion: and even now, wherever the roof is flat, we have an idea of convenience and facility of access, which still renders the balustrade agreeable, and the statue beautiful, if well designed. It must not be a figure of perfect peace or repose; far less should it be in violent action: but it should be fixed in that quick, startled stillness, which is the result of intent observation or expectation, and which seems ready to start into motion every instant. Its height should be slightly colossal, as it is always to be seen against the sky; and its draperies should not be too heavy, as the eye will always expect them to be caught by the wind. We shall enter into this subject, however, more fully hereafter. We only wish at present to vindicate from the charge of impropriety one of the chief features of the Italian villa. Its white figures, always marble, remain entirely unsullied by the weather, and stand out with great majesty against the blue air behind them, taking away from the heaviness, without destroying the simplicity, of the general form.

128. It seems then that, by its form and details, the villa of the Lago di Como attains so high a degree of elevation of character, as not only brings it into harmony of its *locus*, without any assistance from appearance of antiquity, but may, we think, permit it to dispense even with solidity of material, and appear in light summer stucco, instead of raising itself in imperishable marble. And this conclusion, which is merely theoretical, is verified by fact: for we remember no instance, except in cases where poverty had overpowered pretension, or decay had turned rejoicing into silence, in which the lightness of the material was offensive to the feelings; in all cases, it is agreeable to the eye. Where it is allowed to get worn, and discolored, and broken, it induces a wretched mockery of the dignified form which it preserves; but, as long as it is renewed at proper periods, and watched over by the eye of its inhabitant, it is an excellent and easily managed medium of effect.

129. With all the praise, however, which we have bestowed upon it, we do not say that the villa of the Larian Lake is

perfection; indeed we cannot say so, until we have compared it with a few other instances, chiefly to be found in Italy, on whose soil we delay, as being the native country of the villa, properly so-called, and as ever yet being almost the only spot of Europe where any good specimens of it are to be found; for we do not understand by the term "villa" a cubic erection, with one window on each side of a verdant door, and three on the second and uppermost story, such as the word suggests to the fertile imagination of ruralizing cheesemon-gers; neither do we understand the quiet and unpretending country house of a respectable gentleman; neither do we understand such a magnificent mass of hereditary stone as generally forms the autumn retreat of an English noble; but we understand the light but elaborate summer habitation, raised however and wherever it pleases his fancy, by some individual of great wealth and influence, who can enrich it with every attribute of beauty; furnish it with every appurtenance of pleasure; and repose in it with the dignity of a mind trained to exertion or authority. Such a building could not exist in Greece, where every district a mile and a quarter square was quarreling with all its neighbors. It could exist, and did exist, in Italy, where the Roman power secured tranquillity, and the Roman constitution distributed its authority among a great number of individuals, on whom, while it raised them to a position of great influence, and, in its later times, of wealth, it did not bestow the power of raising palaces or private fortresses. The villa was their peculiar habitation, their only resource, and a most agreeable one; because the multitudes of the kingdom being, for a long period, confined to a narrow territory, though ruling the world, rendered the population of the city so dense, as to drive out its higher ranks to the neighboring hamlets of Tibur and Tusculum.

130. In other districts of Europe the villa is not found, because in very perfect monarchies, as in Austria, the power is thrown chiefly into the hands of a few, who build themselves palaces, not villas; and in perfect republics, as in

Switzerland, the power is so split among the multitude, that nobody can build himself anything. In general, in kingdoms of great extent, the country house becomes the permanent and hereditary habitation; and the villas are all crowded together, and form gingerbread rows in the environs of the capital; and, in France and Germany, the excessively disturbed state of affairs in the Middle Ages compelled every baron or noble to defend himself, and retaliate on his neighbors as he best could, till the villa was lost in the château and the fortress; and men now continue to build as their forefathers built (and long may they do so), surrounding the domicile of pleasure with a moat and a glacis, and guarding its garret windows with turrets and towers: while, in England, the nobles, comparatively few, and of great power, inhabit palaces, not villas; and the rest of the population is chiefly crowded into cities, in the activity of commerce, or dispersed over estates in that of agriculture; leaving only one grade of gentry, who have neither the taste to desire, nor the power to erect, the villa, properly so-called.

131. We must not, therefore, be surprised if, on leaving Italy, where the crowd of poverty-stricken nobility can still repose their pride in the true villa, we find no farther examples of it worthy of consideration; though we hope to have far greater pleasure in contemplating its substitutes, the château and the fortress. We must be excused, therefore, for devoting one paper more to the state of villa architecture in Italy; after which we shall endeavor to apply the principles we shall have deduced to the correction of some abuses in the erection of English country houses, in cases where scenery would demand beauty of design and wealth permit finish of decoration.

III.

THE ITALIAN VILLA (Concluded).

132. WE do not think there is any truth in the aphorism, now so frequently advanced in England, that the adaptation of shelter to the corporal comfort of the human race is the original and true end of the art of architecture, properly so-called: for, were such the case, he would be the most distinguished architect who was best acquainted with the properties of cement, with the nature of stone, and the various durability of wood. That such knowledge is necessary to the perfect architect we do not deny; but it is no more the end and purpose of his application, than a knowledge of the alphabet is the object of the refined scholar, or of rhythm of the inspired poet.

133. For, supposing that we were for a moment to consider that we built a house *merely* to be lived in, and that the whole bent of our invention, in raising the edifice, is to be directed to the provision of comfort for the life to be spent therein; supposing that we build it with the most perfect dryness and coolness of cellar, the most luxurious appurtenances of pantry; that we build our walls with the most compacted strength of material, the most studied economy of space; that we leave not a chink in the floor for a breath of wind to pass through, not a hinge in the door, which, by any possible exertion of its irritable muscles, could creak; that we elevate our chambers into exquisite coolness, furnish them with every attention to the maintenance of general health, as well as the prevention of present inconvenience: to do all this, we must be possessed of great knowledge and various skill; let this knowledge and skill be applied with the greatest energy, and

what have they done? Exactly as much as brute animals can do by mere instinct; nothing more than bees and beavers, moles and magpies, ants and earwigs, do every day of their lives, without the slightest effort of reason; we have made ourselves superior as architects to the most degraded animation of the universe, only insomuch as we have lavished the highest efforts of intellect, to do what they have done with the most limited sensations that can constitute life.

134. The mere preparation of convenience, therefore, is not architecture in which man can take pride, or ought to take delight; * but the high and ennobling art of architecture is that of giving to buildings, whose parts are determined by necessity, such forms and colors as shall delight the mind, by preparing it for the operations to which it is to be subjected in the building: and thus, as it is altogether to the mind that the work of the architect is addressed, it is not as a part of his art, but as a limitation of its extent, that he must be acquainted with the minor principles of the economy of domestic erections. For this reason, though we shall notice every class of edifice, it does not come within our proposed plan, to enter into any detailed consideration of the inferior buildings of each class, which afford no scope for the play of the imagination by their nature or size; but we shall generally select the most perfect and beautiful examples, as those in which alone the architect has the power of fulfilling the high purposes of his art. In the villa, however, some exception must be made, inasmuch as it will be useful, and perhaps interesting, to arrive at some fixed conclusions respecting the modern buildings, improperly called villas, raised by moderate wealth, and of limited size, in which the architect is compelled to produce his effect without extent or decoration. The principles which we have hitherto arrived at, deduced as they are from edifices of the noblest character, will be but of little use to a country gentleman, about to insinuate himself and his habitation into a quiet corner of our lovely country; and, therefore, we must glance at the more humble homes

[* Compare "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," chap. i. § 1.]

of the Italian, preparatory to the consideration of what will best suit our own less elevated scenery.

135. First, then, we lose the terraced approach, or, at least, its size and splendor, as these require great wealth to erect them, and perpetual expense to preserve them. For the chain of terraces we find substituted a simple garden, somewhat formally laid out; but redeemed from the charge of meanness by the nobility and size attained by most of its trees; the line of immense cypresses which generally surrounds it in part, and the luxuriance of the vegetation of its flowering shrubs. It has frequently a large entrance gate, well designed, but carelessly executed; sometimes singularly adorned with fragments of ancient sculpture, regularly introduced, which the spectator partly laments, as preserved in a mode so incongruous with their ancient meaning, and partly rejoices over, as preserved at all. The grottoes of the superior garden are here replaced by light ranges of arched summerhouses, designed in stucco, and occasionally adorned in their interior with fresco paintings of considerable brightness and beauty.

136. All this, however, has very little effect in introducing the eye to the villa itself, owing to the general want of inequality of level in the ground, so that the main building becomes an independent feature, instead of forming the apex of a mass of various architecture. Consequently, the weight of form which in the former case it might, and even ought to, possess, would here be cumbrous, ugly, and improper; and accordingly we find it got rid of. This is done, first by the addition of the square tower, a feature which is not allowed to break in upon the symmetry of buildings of high architectural pretensions: but is immediately introduced, whenever less richness of detail, or variety of approach, demands or admits of irregularity of form. It is a constant and most important feature in Italian landscape; sometimes high and apparently detached, as when it belongs to sacred edifices; sometimes low and strong, united with the mass of the fortress, or varying the form of the villa. It is always simple in

its design, flat-roofed, its corners being turned by very slightly projecting pilasters, which are carried up the whole height of the tower, whatever it may be, without any regard to proportion, terminating in two arches on each side, in the villa most frequently filled up, though their curve is still distinguished by darker tint and slight relief. Two black holes on each side, near the top, are very often the only entrances by which light or sun can penetrate. These are seldom actually large, always proportionably small, and destitute of ornament or relief.

137. The forms of the villas to which these towers are attached are straggling, and varied by many crossing masses; but the great principle of simplicity is always kept in view; everything is square, and terminated by parallel lines; no tall chimneys, no conical roofs, no fantastic ornaments are ever admitted: the arch alone is allowed to relieve the stiffness of the general effect. This is introduced frequently, but not in the windows, which are either squares or double squares, at great distances from each other, set deeply into the walls and only adorned with broad flat borders. Where more light is required they are set moderately close, and protected by an outer line of arches, deep enough to keep the noonday sun from entering the rooms. These lines of arches cast soft shadows along the bright fronts, and are otherwise of great value. Their effect is pretty well seen in fig. 10; a piece which, while it has no distinguished beauty is yet pleasing by its entire simplicity; and peculiarly so, when we know that simplicity to have been chosen (some say, built) for its last and lonely habitation, by a mind of softest passion as of purest thought; and to have sheltered its silent old age among the blue and quiet hills, till it passed away like a deep lost melody from the earth, leaving a light of peace about the gray tomb at which the steps of those who pass by always falter, and around this deserted, and decaying, and calm habitation of the thoughts of the departed; Petrarch's, at Arquà. A more familiar instance of the application of these arches is the Villa of Mæcenas at Tivoli, though it is improperly styled

a villa, being pretty well known to have been nothing but stables.

138. The buttress is the only remaining point worthy of notice. It prevails to a considerable extent among the villas of the south, being always broad and tall, and occasionally so frequent as to give the building, viewed laterally, a pyramidal and cumbrous effect. The most usual form is that of a simple sloped mass, terminating in the wall, without the slightest finishing, and rising at an angle of about 84° . Sometimes it is perpendicular, sloped at the top into the wall; but it never has steps of increasing projection as it goes down. By observing the occurrence of these buttresses, an architect, who knew nothing of geology, might accurately determine the points of most energetic volcanic action in Italy; for their use is to protect the building from the injuries of earthquakes, the Italian having far too much good taste to use them, except in cases of extreme necessity. Thus, they are never found in North Italy, even in the fortresses. They begin to occur among the Apennines, south of Florence; they become more and more frequent and massy towards Rome; in the neighborhood of Naples they are huge and multitudinous, even the walls themselves being sometimes sloped; and the same state of things continues as we go south, on the coast of Calabria and Sicily.

139. Now, these buttresses present one of the most extraordinary and striking instances of the beauty of adaptation of style to locality and peculiarity of circumstance, that can be met with in the whole range of architectural investigation. Taken in the abstract, they are utterly detestable, formal, clumsy, and apparently unnecessary. Their builder thinks so himself: he hates them as things to be looked at, though he erects them as things to be depended upon. He has no idea that there is any propriety in their presence, though he knows perfectly well that there is a great deal of necessity; and, therefore he builds them. Where? On rocks whose sides are one mass of buttresses, of precisely the same form; on rocks which are cut and cloven by basalt and lava dikes

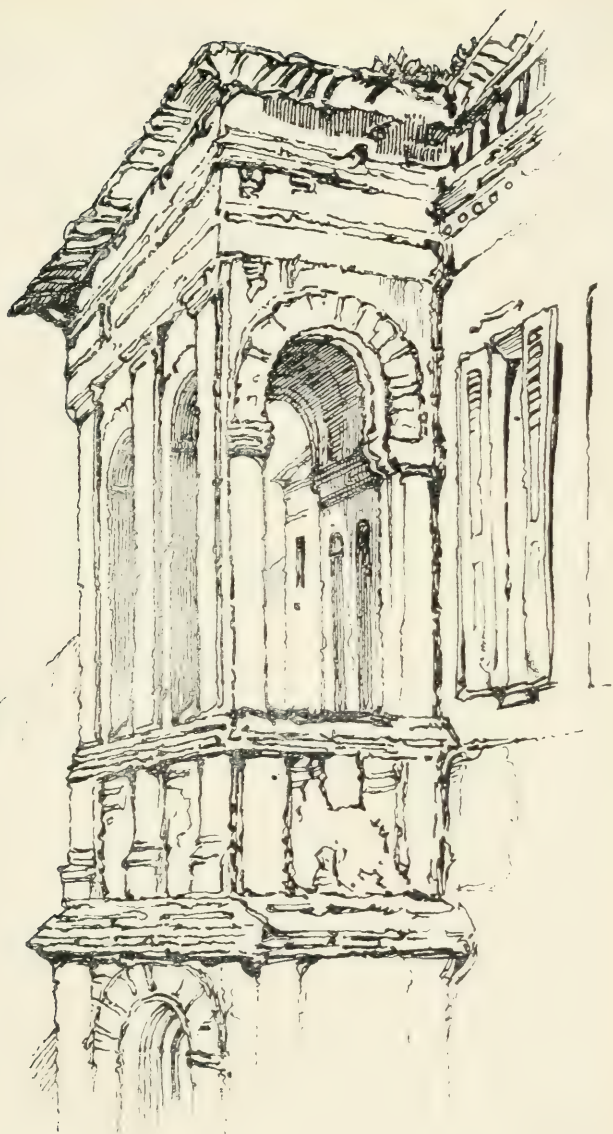


Fig. 10. Petrarch's Villa ; Arquà.—1837.

of every size, and which, being themselves secondary, wear away gradually by exposure to the atmosphere, leaving the intersecting dikes standing out in solid and vertical walls, from the faces of their precipices. The eye passes over heaps of scorix and sloping banks of ashes, over the huge ruins of more ancient masses, till it trembles for the fate of the crags still standing round; but it finds them ribbed with basalt like bones, buttressed with a thousand lava walls, propped upon pedestals and pyramids of iron, which the pant and the pulse of the earthquake itself can scarcely move, for they are its own work; it climbs up to their summits, and there it finds the work of man; but it is no puny domicile, no eggshell imagination, it is in a continuation of the mountain itself, inclined at the same slope, ribbed in the same manner, protected by the same means against the same danger; not, indeed, filling the eye with delight, but, which is of more importance, freeing it from fear, and beautifully corresponding with the prevalent lines around it, which a less massive form would have rendered, in some cases, particularly about Etna, even ghastly. Even in the long and luxuriant views from Capo di Monte, and the heights to the east of Naples, the spectator looks over a series of volcanic eminences, generally, indeed, covered with rich verdure, but starting out here and there in gray and worn walls, fixed at a regular slope, and breaking away into masses more and more rugged towards Vesuvius, till the eye gets thoroughly habituated to their fortress-like outlines.

140. Throughout the whole of this broken country, and, on the summits of these volcanic cones, rise innumerable villas; but they do not offend us, as we should have expected, by their attestation of cheerfulness of life amidst the wrecks left by destructive operation, nor hurt the eye by non-assimilation with the immediate features of the landscape: but they seem to rise prepared and adapted for resistance to, and endurance of, the circumstances of their position; to be inhabited by beings of energy and force sufficient to decree and to carry on a steady struggle with opposing elements, and of

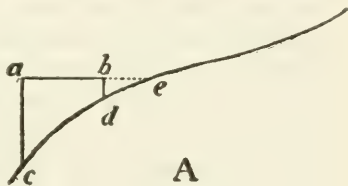
taste and feeling sufficient to proportion the form of the walls of men to the clefts in the flanks of the volcano, and to prevent the exultation and the lightness of transitory life from startling, like a mockery, the eternal remains of disguised desolation.

141. We have always considered these circumstances as most remarkable proofs of the perfect dependence of architecture on its situation, and of the utter impossibility of judging of the beauty of any building in the abstract: and we would also lay much stress upon them, as showing with what boldness the designer may introduce into his building, undisguised, such parts as local circumstances render desirable; for there will invariably be something in the nature of that which causes their necessity, which will endow them with beauty.

142. These, then, are the principal features of the Italian villa, modifications of which, of course more or less dignified in size, material or decoration, in proportion to the power and possessions of their proprietor, may be considered as composing every building of that class in Italy. A few remarks on their general effect will enable us to conclude the subject.

143. We have been so long accustomed to see the horizontal lines and simple forms which, as we have observed, still prevail among the Ausonian villas, used with the greatest dexterity, and the noblest effect, in the compositions of Claude, Salvator, and Poussin—and so habituated to consider these compositions as perfect models of the beautiful, as well as the pure in taste—that it is difficult to divest ourselves of prejudice, in the contemplation of the sources from which those masters received their education, their feelings, and their subjects. We would hope, however, and we think it may be proved, that in this case principle assists and encourages prejudice. First, referring only to the gratification afforded to the eye, which we know to depend upon fixed mathematical principles, though those principles are not always developed, it is to be observed, that country is always most beautiful when it is made up of curves, and that one of

the chief characters of Ausonian landscape is the perfection of its curvatures, induced by the gradual undulation of promontories into the plains. In suiting architecture to such a country, that building which least interrupts the curve on which it is placed will be felt to be most delightful to the eye.



144. Let us take then the simple form $a b c d$, interrupting the curve $c e$ [fig. 11, A]. Now, the eye will always continue the principal lines of such an object for itself, until they cut the main curve; that is, it will carry on $a b$ to e , and the total effect of the interruption will be that of the form $c d e$. Had the line $b d$ been nearer to $a c$, the effect would have been just the same. Now, every curve may be considered as composed of an infinite number of lines at right angles to each other, as $m n$ is made up of $o p$, $p q$, etc., (fig.

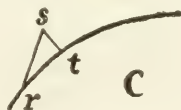
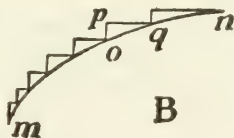


Fig. 11. Broken Curves.

B), whose ratio to each other varies with the direction of the curve. Then, if the right lines which form the curve at c (fig. A) be increased, we have the figure $c d e$, that is, the apparent interruption of the curve is an increased part of the curve itself. To the mathematical reader we can explain our meaning more clearly, by pointing out that, taking c for our origin, we have $a c$, $a e$, for the co-ordinates of e , and that, therefore, their ratio is the equation to the curve. Whence it appears, that, when any curve is broken in upon by a building composed of simple vertical and horizontal lines, the eye

is furnished, by the interruption, with the equation to that part of the curve which is interrupted. If, instead of square forms, we take obliquity, as $r s t$ (fig. C), we have one line, $s t$, an absolute break, and the other $r s$, in false proportion. If we take another curve, we have an infinite number of lines, only two of which are where they ought to be. And this is the true reason for the constant introduction of features which appear to be somewhat formal, into the most perfect imaginations of the old masters, and the true cause of the extreme beauty of the groups formed by Italian villages in general.

145. Thus much for the mere effect on the eye. Of correspondence with national character, we have shown that we must not be disappointed, if we find little in the villa. The unfrequency of windows in the body of the building is partly attributed to the climate; but the total exclusion of light from some parts, as the base of the central tower, carries our thoughts back to the ancient system of Italian life, when every man's home had its dark, secret places, the abodes of his worst passions; whose shadows were alone intrusted with the motion of his thoughts; whose walls became the whited sepulchers of crime; whose echoes were never stirred except by such words as they dared not repeat; * from which the rod of power, or the dagger of passion, came forth invisible; before whose stillness princes grew pale, as their fates were prophesied or fulfilled by the horoscope or the hemlock; and nations, as the whisper of anarchy or of heresy was avenged by the opening of the low doors, through which those who entered returned not.

146. The mind of the Italian, sweet and smiling in its operations, deep and silent in its emotions, was thus, in some degree, typified by those abodes into which he was wont to retire from the tumult and wrath of life, to cherish or to

* Shelley has caught the feeling finely:—"The house is penetrated to its corners by the peeping insolence of the day. When the time comes the crickets shall not see me."—*Cenci* [Act II. scene 1, quoted from memory.]

gratify the passions which its struggles had excited; abodes which now gleam brightly and purely among the azure mountains, and by the sapphire sea, but whose stones are dropped with blood; whose vaults are black with the memory of guilt and grief unpunished and unavenged, and by whose walls the traveler hastens fearfully, when the sun has set, lest he should hear, awakening again through the horror of their chambers, the faint wail of the children of Ugolino,* the ominous alarm of Bonatti, or the long low cry of her who perished at Coll' Alto.

OXFORD, *July*, 1838.

[* Ugolino; Dante, *Inferno* xxxiii. Guido Bonatti, the astrologer of Forlì, *Inferno* xx., 118. The lady who perished at Coll' Alto, *i.e.* the higher part of Colle de Val d'Elsa, between Siena and Volterra—was Sapia; *Purgatorio*, xiii. 100–154.]

IV.

THE LOWLAND VILLA—ENGLAND.

147. ALTHOUGH, as we have frequently observed, our chief object in these papers is, to discover the connection existing between national architecture and character, and therefore is one leading us rather to the investigation of what is, than of what ought to be, we yet consider that the subject would be imperfectly treated, if we did not, at the conclusion of the consideration of each particular rank of building, endeavor to apply such principles as may have been demonstrated to the architecture of our country, and to discover the *beau idéal* of English character, which should be preserved through all the decorations which the builder may desire, and through every variety which fancy may suggest. There never was, and never can be, a universal *beau idéal* in architecture, and the arrival at all local models of beauty would be the task of ages; but we can always, in some degree, determine those of our own lovely country. We cannot, however, in the present case, pass from the contemplation of the villa of a totally different climate, to the investigation of what is beautiful here, without the slightest reference to styles now or formerly adopted for our own "villas," if such they are to be called; and therefore it will be necessary to devote a short time to the observance of the peculiarities of such styles, if we possess them; or, if not, of the causes of their absence.

148. We have therefore headed this paper "The Villa, England;" awakening, without doubt, a different idea in the mind of every one who reads the words. Some, accustomed to the appearance of metropolitan villas, will think of brick buildings, with infinite appurtenances of black nicked chim-

ney-pots, and plastered fronts, agreeably varied with graceful cracks, and undulatory shades of pink, brown, and green, communicated to the cement by smoky showers. Others will imagine large, square, many-windowed masses of white, set with careful choice of situation exactly where they will spoil the landscape to such a conspicuous degree, as to compel the gentlemen traveling on the outside of the mail to inquire of the guard, with great eagerness, “whose place that is;” and to enable the guard to reply with great distinctness, that it belongs to Squire —, to the infinite gratification of Squire —, and the still more infinite edification of the gentlemen on the outside of the mail. Others will remember masses of very red brick, quoined with stone; with columnar porticoes, about one-third of the height of the building, and two niches, with remarkable looking heads and bag-wigs in them, on each side; and two teapots, with a pocket-handkerchief hanging over each (described to the astonished spectator as “Grecian urns”) located upon the roof, just under the chimneys. Others will go back to the range of Elizabethan gables; but none will have any idea of a fixed character, stamped on a class of national edifices. This is very melancholy, and very discouraging; the more so, as it is not without cause.

149. In the first place, Britain unites in itself so many geological formations, each giving a peculiar character to the country which it composes, that there is hardly a district five miles broad, which preserves the same features of landscape through its whole width.* If, for example, six foreigners were to land severally at Glasgow, at Aberystwith, at Falmouth, at Brighton, at Yarmouth, and at Newcastle, and to confine their investigations to the country within twenty miles of them, what different impressions would they receive of British landscape! If, therefore, there be as many forms

* Length is another thing: we might divide England into strips of country, running southwest and northeast, which would be composed of the same rock, and therefore would present the same character throughout the whole of their length. Almost all our great roads cut these transversely, and therefore seldom remain for ten miles together on the same beds.

of edifice as there are peculiarities of situation, we can have no national style; and if we abandon the idea of a correspondence with situation, we lose the only criterion capable of forming a national style.*

150. Another cause to be noticed is the peculiar independence of the Englishman's disposition; a feeling which prompts him to suit his own humor, rather than fall in with the prevailing cast of social sentiment, or of natural beauty

* It is thus that we find the most perfect schools of architecture have arisen in districts whose character is unchanging. Looking to Egypt first, we find a climate inducing a perpetual state of heavy feverish excitement, fostered by great magnificence of natural phenomena, and increased by the general custom of exposing the head continually to the sun (Herodotus, bk. III. chap. 12); so that, as in a dreaming fever we imagine distorted creatures and countenances moving and living in the quiet objects of the chamber, the Egyptian endowed all existence with distorted animation; turned dogs into deities, and leeks into lightning-darters; then gradually invested the blank granite with sculptured mystery, designed in superstition, and adored in disease; and then such masses of architecture arose as, in delirium, we feel crushing down upon us with eternal weight, and see extending far into the blackness above; huge and shapeless columns of colossal life; immense and immeasurable avenues of mountain stone. This was a perfect—that is, a marked, enduring, and decided school of architecture, induced by an unchanging and peculiar character of climate. Then in the purer air, and among the more refined energies of Greece, architecture rose into a more studied beauty, equally perfect in its school, because fostered in a district not 50 miles square, and in its dependent isles and colonies, all of which were under the same air, and partook of the same features of landscape. In Rome, it became less perfect, because more imitative than indigenous, and corrupted by the traveling, and conquering, and stealing ambition of the Roman; yet still a school of architecture, because the whole of Italy presented the same peculiarities of scene. So with the Spanish and Moresco schools, and many others; passing over the Gothic, which, though we hope hereafter to show it to be no exception to the rule, involves too many complicated questions to be now brought forward as a proof of it.

[The comparison of Egyptian architecture with delirious visions seems to be an allusion to De Quincey's passage in "The Pains of Opium"—the last paper in "the Confessions of an Opium-Eater"—where, after describing Piranesi's *Dreams*, he tells how he fancied he was "buried for a thousand years, in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids," etc.]

and expression; and which, therefore,—there being much obstinate originality in his mind,—produces strange varieties of dwelling, frequently rendered still more preposterous by his love of display; a love universally felt in England, and often absurdly indulged. Wealth is worshiped in France as the means of purchasing pleasure; in Italy, as an instrument of power; in England, as the means “of showing off.” It would be a very great sacrifice indeed, in an Englishman of the average stamp, to put his villa out of the way, where nobody would ever see it, or think of *him*; it is his ambition to hear every one exclaiming, “What a pretty place! whose can it be!” And he cares very little about the peace which he has disturbed, or the repose which he has interrupted; though, even while he thus pushes himself into the way, he keeps an air of sulky retirement, of hedgehog independence, about his house, which takes away any idea of sociability or good-humor, which might otherwise have been suggested by his choice of situation.

151. But, in spite of all these unfortunate circumstances, there are some distinctive features in our English country houses, which are well worth a little attention. First, in the approach, we have one component part of effect, which may be called peculiarly our own, and which requires much study before it can be managed well,—the avenue. It is true that we meet with noble lines of timber trees cresting some of the larger bastions of Continental fortified cities; we see interminable regiments of mistletoed apple trees flanking the carriage road; and occasionally we approach a turreted chateau * by a broad way, “edged with poplar pale.” But, allowing all this, the legitimate glory of the perfect avenue is ours still, as will appear by a little consideration of the elements which constitute its beauty.

152. The original idea was given by the opening of the tangled glades in our most ancient forests. It is rather a

* Or a city. Any one who remembers entering Carlsruhe from the north by the two miles of poplar avenue, remembers entering the most soulless of all cities, by the most lifeless of all entrances.

curious circumstance that, in those woods whose decay has been most instrumental in forming the bog districts of Ireland, the trees have, in general, been planted in symmetrical rows, at distances of about twenty feet apart. If the arrangement of our later woods be not quite so formal, they at least present frequent openings, carpeted with green sward, and edged with various foliage, which the architect (for so may the designer of the avenue be entitled) should do little more than reduce to symmetry and place in position, preserving, as much as possible, the manner and the proportions of nature. The avenue, therefore, must not be too long. It is quite a mistake to suppose that there is sublimity in a monotonous length of line, unless indeed it be carried to an extent generally impossible, as in the case of the long walk at Windsor. From three to four hundred yards is a length which will display the elevation well, and will not become tiresome from continued monotony. The kind of tree must, of course, be regulated by circumstances; but the foliage must be unequally disposed, so as to let in passages of light across the path, and cause the motion of any object across it to change, like an undulating melody, from darkness to light. It should meet at the top, so as to cause twilight, but not obscurity; and the idea of a vaulted roof, without rigidity. The ground should be green, so that the sunlight may tell with force wherever it strikes. Now, this kind of rich and shadowy vista is found in its perfection only in England: it is an attribute of green country; it is associated with all our memories of forest freedom, of our wood-rangers, and yeomen with the "doublets of the Lincoln green;" with our pride of ancient archers, whose art was fostered in such long and breezeless glades; with our thoughts of the merry chases of our kingly companies, when the dewy antlers sparkled down the intertwined paths of the windless woods, at the morning echo of the hunter's horn; with all, in fact, that once contributed to give our land its ancient name of "merry" England; a name which, in this age of steam and iron, it will have some difficulty in keeping.

153. This, then, is the first feature we would direct attention to, as characteristic, in the English villa: and be it remembered, that we are not speaking of the immense lines of foliage which guide the eye to some of our English palaces, for those are rather the adjuncts of the park than the approach to the building; but of the more laconic avenue, with the two crested columns and the iron gate at its entrance, leading the eye, in the space of a hundred yards or so, to the gables of its gray mansion. A good instance of this approach may be found at Petersham, by following the right side of the Thames for about half a mile from Richmond Hill; though the house, which, in this case, is approached by a noble avenue, is much to be reprehended, as a bad mixture of imitation of the Italian with corrupt Elizabethan; though it is somewhat instructive, as showing the ridiculous effect of statues out of doors in a climate like ours.

154. And now that we have pointed out the kind of approach most peculiarly English, that approach will guide us to the only style of villa architecture which can be called English,—the Elizabethan, and its varieties,—a style fantastic in its details, and capable of being subjected to no rule, but, as we think, well adapted for the scenery in which it arose. We allude not only to the pure Elizabethan, but even to the strange mixtures of classical ornaments with Gothic forms, which we find prevailing in the sixteenth century. In the most simple form, we have a building extending round three sides of a court, and, in the larger halls, round several interior courts, terminating in sharply gabled fronts, with broad oriels, divided into very narrow lights by channeled mullions, without decoration of any kind; the roof relieved by projecting dormer windows, whose lights are generally divided into three, terminating in very flat arches without cusps, the intermediate edge of the roof being battlemented. Then we find wreaths of ornament introduced at the base of the oriels; * ranges of short columns, the base of one upon the capital of another, running up beside them; the bases

* As in a beautiful example in Brasenose College, Oxford.

being very tall, sometimes decorated with knots of flower-work; the columns usually fluted,—wreathed, in richer examples, with ornament. The entrance is frequently formed by double ranges of those short columns, with intermediate arches, with shell canopies, and rich crests above.* This portico is carried up to some height above the roof, which is charged with an infinite variety of decorated chimneys.

155. Now, all this is utterly barbarous as architecture; but, with the exception of the chimneys, it is not false in taste; for it was originally intended for retired and quiet habitations in our forest country, not for conspicuous palaces in the streets of the city; and we have shown, in speaking of green country, that the eye is gratified † with fantastic details; that it is prepared, by the mingled lights of the natural scenery, for rich and entangled ornament, and would not only endure, but demand, irregularity of system in the architecture of man, to correspond with the infinite variety of form in the wood architecture of nature. Few surprises can be imagined more delightful than the breaking out of one of these rich gables, with its decorated entrance, among the dark trunks and twinkling leaves of forest scenery. Such an effect is rudely given in fig. 12. We would direct the attention chiefly to the following points in the building:—

156. First, it is a humorist, an odd, twisted, independent being, with a great deal of mixed, obstinate, and occasionally absurd originality. It has one or two graceful lines about it, and several harsh and cutting ones; it is a whole, which would allow of no unison with any other architecture; it is gathered in itself, and would look very ugly indeed, if pieces in a purer style of building were added. All this corresponds with points of English character, with its humors, its independency, and its horror of being put out of its own way.

* The portico of the [old] Schools and the inner courts of Merton and St. John's Colleges, Oxford; an old house at Charlton, Kent; and Burleigh House, will probably occur to the mind of the architect, as good examples of the varieties of this mixed style.

[† *i.e.* when the spectator is surrounded by woodland scenery. *Vide ante*, § 88.]

157. Again, it is a thoroughly domestic building, homely and cottage-like in its prevailing forms, awakening no elevated ideas, assuming no nobility of form. It has none of the pride, or the grace of beauty, none of the dignity of delight which we found in the villa of Italy; but it is a habitation of everyday life, a protection from momentary inconvenience, covered with stiff efforts at decoration, and exactly typical of the mind of its inhabitant: not noble in its taste, not haughty in its recreation, not pure in its perception of beauty; but domestic in its pleasures, fond of matter-of-fact rather than of imagination, yet sparkling occasionally with odd wit and grotesque association. The Italian obtains his beauty, as his recreation, with quietness, with few and noble lines, with great seriousness and depth of thought, with very rare interruptions to the simple train of feeling. But the Englishman's villa is full of effort: it is a business with him to be playful, an infinite labor to be ornamental: he forces his amusement with fits of contrasted thought, with mingling of minor touches of humor, with a good deal of sulkiness, but with no melancholy; and therefore, owing to this last adjunct,* the building, in its original state, cannot be called beautiful, and we ought not to consider the effect of its present antiquity, evidence of which is, as was before proved, generally objectionable in a building devoted to pleasure,† and is only agreeable here, because united with the memory of a departed pride.

158. Again, it is a lifelike building, sparkling in its casements, brisk in its air, letting much light in at the walls and roof, low and comfortable-looking in its door. The Italian's dwelling is much walled in, letting out no secrets from the inside, dreary and drowsy in its effect. Just such is the difference between the minds of the inhabitants; the one passing away in deep and dark reverie, the other quick and business-like, enjoying its everyday occupations, and active in its ordinary engagements.

[* Namely the fact that there is no melancholy in the English play-impulse; *v. ante*, § 23.]

[† See § 118 seq.]

159. Again, it is a regularly planned, mechanical, well-disciplined building; each of its parts answering to its opposite, each of its ornaments matched with similarity. The Italian (where it has no high pretense to architectural beauty) is a rambling and irregular edifice, varied with uncorresponding masses: and the mind of the Italian we find similarly irregular, a thing of various and ungovernable impulse, without fixed principle of action; the Englishman's, regular and uniform in its emotions, steady in its habits, and firm even in its most trivial determinations.

160. Lastly, the size of the whole is diminutive, compared with the villas of the south, in which the effect was always large and general. Here the eye is drawn into the investigation of particular points, and miniature details; just as, in comparing the English and Continental cottages, we found the one characterized by a minute finish, and the other by a massive effect, exactly correspondent with the scale of the features and scenery of their respective localities.

161. It appears, then, from a consideration of these several points, that, in our antiquated style of villa architecture, some national feeling may be discovered; but in any buildings now raised there is no character whatever: all is ridiculous imitation, and despicable affectation; and it is much to be lamented, that now, when a great deal of public attention has been directed to architecture on the part of the public, more efforts are not made to turn that attention from mimicking Swiss *châlets*, to erecting English houses. We need not devote more time to the investigation of *purely* domestic English architecture, though we hope to derive much instruction and pleasure from the contemplation of buildings partly adapted for defense, and partly for residence. The introduction of the means of defense is, however, a distinction which we do not wish at present to pass over; and therefore, in our next paper, we hope to conclude the subject of the villa, by a few remarks on the style now best adapted for English scenery.

V.

THE ENGLISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

162. It has lately become a custom, among the more enlightened and refined of metropolitan shopkeepers, to advocate the cause of propriety in architectural decoration, by ensconcing their shelves, counters, and clerks in classical edifices, agreeably ornamented with ingenious devices, typical of the class of articles to which the tradesman particularly desires to direct the public attention. We find our grocers enshrined in temples whose columns are of canisters, and whose pinnacles are of sugar-loaves. Our shoemakers shape their soles under Gothic portals, with pendants of shoes, and canopies of Wellingtons; and our cheesemongers will, we doubt not, soon follow the excellent example, by raising shops the varied diameters of whose jointed columns, in their address to the eye, shall awaken memories of Staffa, Pæstum, and Palmyra; and in their address to the tongue, shall arouse exquisite associations of remembered flavor, Dutch, Stilton, and Strachino.

163. Now, this fit of taste on the part of our tradesmen is only a coarse form of a disposition inherent in the human mind. Those objects to which the eye has been most frequently accustomed, and among which the intellect has formed its habits of action, and the soul its modes of emotion, become agreeable to the thoughts, from their correspondence with their prevailing cast, especially when the business of life has had any relation to those objects; for it is in the habitual and necessary occupation that the most painless hours of existence are passed: whatever be the nature of that occupation, the memories belonging to it will always be agreeable, and,

therefore, the objects awakening such memories will invariably be found beautiful, whatever their character or form.

164. It is thus that taste is the child and the slave of memory; and beauty is tested, not by any fixed standard, but by the chances of association; so that in every domestic building evidence will be found of the kind of life through which its owner has passed, in the operation of the habits of mind which that life has induced. From the superannuated coxswain, who plants his old ship's figure-head in his six square feet of front garden at Bermondsey, to the retired noble, the proud portal of whose mansion is surmounted by the broad shield and the crested gryphon, we are all guided, in our purest conceptions, our most ideal pursuit, of the beautiful, by remembrances of active occupation; and by principles derived from industry regulate the fancies of our repose.

165. It would be excessively interesting to follow out the investigation of this subject more fully, and to show how the most refined pleasures, the most delicate perceptions, of the creature who has been appointed to eat bread by the sweat of his brow, are dependent upon, and intimately connected with, his hours of labor. This question, however, has no relation to our immediate object, and we only allude to it, that we may be able to distinguish between the two component parts of individual character; the one being the consequence of continuous habits of life acting upon natural temperament and disposition, the other being the *humor* of character, consequent upon circumstances altogether accidental, taking stern effect upon feelings previously determined by the first part of the character; laying on, as it were, the finishing touches, and occasioning the innumerable prejudices, fancies, and eccentricities, which, modified in every individual to an infinite extent, form the visible veil of the human heart.

166. Now, we have defined the province of the architect to be, that of selecting such forms and colors as shall delight the mind, by preparing it for the operations to which it is to be subjected in the building. Now, no forms, in domestic architecture, can thus prepare it more distinctly than those which

correspond closely with the first, that is, the fixed and fundamental, part of character, which is always so uniform in its action, as to induce great simplicity in whatever it designs. Nothing, on the contrary, can be more injurious than the slightest influence of the *humors* upon the edifice; for the influence of what is fitful in its energy, and petty in its imagination, would destroy all the harmony of parts, all the majesty of the whole; would substitute singularity for beauty, amusement for delight, and surprise for veneration. We could name several instances of buildings erected by men of the highest talent, and the most perfect general taste, who yet, not having paid much attention to the first principles of architecture, permitted the humor of their disposition to prevail over the majesty of their intellect, and, instead of building from a fixed design, gratified freak after freak, and fancy after fancy, as they were caught by the dream or the desire; mixed mimicries of incongruous reality with incorporations of undisciplined ideal; awakened every variety of contending feeling and unconnected memory; consummated confusion of form by trickery of detail; and have left barbarism, where half the world will look for loveliness.

167. This is a species of error which it is very difficult for persons paying superficial and temporary attention to architecture to avoid: however just their taste may be in criticism, it will fail in creation. It is only in moments of ease and amusement that they will think of their villa: they make it a mere plaything, and regard it with a kind of petty exultation, which, from its very nature, will give liberty to the light fancy, rather than the deep feeling, of the mind. It is not thought necessary to bestow labor of thought, and periods of deliberation, on one of the toys of life; still less to undergo the vexation of thwarting wishes, and leaving favorite imaginations, relating to minor points, unfulfilled, for the sake of general effect.

168. This feeling, then, is the first to which we would direct attention, as the villa architect's chief enemy: he will find it perpetually and provokingly in his way. He is requested,

perhaps, by a man of great wealth, nay, of established taste in some points, to make a design for a villa in a lovely situation. The future proprietor carries him upstairs to his study, to give him what he calls his "ideas and materials," and, in all probability, begins somewhat thus:—"This, sir, is a slight note: I made it on the spot: approach to Villa Reale, near Pozzuoli. Dancing nymphs, you perceive; cypresses, shell fountain. I think I should like something like this for the approach: classical, you perceive, sir; elegant, graceful. Then, sir, this is a sketch, made by an American friend of mine: Whee-whaw-Kantamaraw's wigwam, King of the—Cannibal Islands, I think he said, sir. Log, you observe; scalps, and boa-constrictor skins: curious. Something like this, sir, would look neat, I think, for the front door; don't you? Then, the lower windows, I've not quite decided upon; but what would you say to Egyptian, sir? I think I should like my windows Egyptian, with hieroglyphics, sir; storks and coffins, and appropriate moldings above: I brought some from Fountains Abbey the other day. Look here, sir; angels' heads putting their tongues out, rolled up in cabbage leaves, with a dragon on each side riding on a broomstick, and the devil looking on from the mouth of an alligator, sir.* Odd, I think; interesting. Then the corners may be turned by octagonal towers, like the center one in Kenilworth Castle; with Gothic doors, portcullis, and all, quite perfect; with cross slits for arrows, battlements for musketry, machicolations for boiling lead, and a room at the top for drying plums; and the conservatory at the bottom, sir, with Virginian creepers up the towers; door supported by sphinxes, holding scrapers in their fore paws, and having their tails prolonged into warm-water pipes, to keep the plants safe in winter, etc." The architect is, without doubt, a little astonished by these ideas and combinations; yet he sits calmly down to draw his elevations; as if he were a stone-mason, or his employer an architect; and the fabric rises to electrify its beholders, and confer immortality on its perpetrator.

* Actually carved on one of the groins of Roslin Chapel.



Fig. 12. Old English Mansion. 1837.

169. This is no exaggeration: we have not only listened to speculations on the probable degree of the future majesty, but contemplated the actual illustrious existence, of several such buildings, with sufficient beauty in the management of some of their features to show that an architect had superintended them, and sufficient taste in their interior economy to prove that a refined intellect had projected them; and had projected a Vandalism, only because fancy had been followed instead of judgment; with as much *nonchalance* as is evinced by a perfect poet, who is extemporizing doggerel for a baby; full of brilliant points, which he cannot help, and jumbled into confusion, for which he does not care.

170. Such are the first difficulties to be encountered in villa designs. They must always continue to occur in some degree, though they might be met with ease by a determination on the part of professional men to give no assistance whatever, beyond the mere superintendence of construction, unless they be permitted to take the whole exterior design into their own hands, merely receiving broad instructions respecting the style (and not attending to them unless they like). They should not make out the smallest detail, unless they were answerable for the whole. In this case, gentlemen architects would be thrown so utterly on their own resources, that, unless those resources were adequate, they would be obliged to surrender the task into more practiced hands; and, if they were adequate, if the amateur had paid so much attention to the art as to be capable of giving the design perfectly, it is probable he would not erect anything strikingly abominable.

171. Such a system (supposing that it could be carried fully into effect, and that there were no such animals as sentimental stone-masons to give technical assistance) might, at first, seem rather an encroachment on the liberty of the subject, inasmuch as it would prevent people from indulging their edificatorial fancies, unless they knew something about the matter, or, as the sufferers would probably complain, from doing what they liked with their own. But the mistake would

evidently lie in their supposing, as people too frequently do, that the outside of their house is their own, and that they have a perfect right therein to make fools of themselves in any manner, and to any extent, they may think proper. This is quite true in the case of interiors; every one has an indisputable right to hold himself up as a laughing-stock to the whole circle of his friends and acquaintances, and to consult his own private asinine comfort by every piece of absurdity which can in any degree contribute to the same; but no one has any right to exhibit his imbecilities at other people's expense, or to claim the public pity by inflicting public pain. In England, especially, where, as we saw before, the rage for attracting observation is universal, the outside of the villa is rendered, by the proprietor's own disposition, the property of those who daily pass by, and whom it hourly affects with pleasure or pain. For the pain which the eye feels from the violation of a law to which it has been accustomed, or the mind from the occurrence of anything jarring to its finest feelings, is as distinct as that occasioned by the interruption of the physical economy, differing only inasmuch as it is not permanent; and, therefore, an individual has as little right to fulfill his own conceptions by disgusting thousands, as, were his body as impenetrable to steel or poison, as his brain to the effect of the beautiful or true, he would have to decorate his carriage roads with caltrops, or to line his plantations with upas trees.

172. The violation of general feelings would thus be unjust, even were their consultation productive of continued vexation to the individual: but it is not. To no one is the architecture of the exterior of a dwelling-house of so little consequence as to its inhabitant. Its material may affect his comfort, and its condition may touch his pride; but, for its architecture, his eye gets accustomed to it in a week, and, after that, Hellenic, Barbaric, or Yankee, are all the same to the domestic feelings, are all lost in the one name of Home. Even the conceit of living in a *châlet*, or a wigwam, or a pagoda, cannot retain its influence for six months over the weak minds which alone can feel it; and the monotony of existence

becomes to them exactly what it would have been had they never inflicted a pang upon the unfortunate spectators, whose unaccustomed eyes shrink daily from the impression to which they have not been rendered callous by custom, or lenient by false taste.

173. If these considerations are just when they allude only to buildings in the abstract, how much more when referring to them as materials of composition, materials of infinite power, to adorn or destroy the loveliness of the earth. The nobler scenery of that earth is the inheritance of all her inhabitants: it is not merely for the few to whom it temporarily belongs, to feed from like swine, or to stable upon like horses, but it has been appointed to be the school of the minds which are kingly among their fellows, to excite the highest energies of humanity, to furnish strength to the lordliest intellect, and food for the holiest emotions of the human soul. The presence of life is, indeed, necessary to its beauty, but of life congenial with its character; and that life is not congenial which thrusts presumptuously forward, amidst the calmness of the universe, the confusion of its own petty interests and groveling imaginations, and stands up with the insolence of a moment, amid the majesty of all time, to build baby fortifications upon the bones of the world, or to sweep the copse from the corrie, and the shadow from the shore, that fools may risk, and gamblers gather, the spoil of a thousand summers.

174. It should therefore be remembered by every proprietor of land in hill country, that his possessions are the means of a peculiar education, otherwise unattainable, to the artists, and in some degree to the literary men, of his country; that, even in this limited point of view, they are a national possession, but much more so when it is remembered how many thousands are perpetually receiving from them, not merely a transitory pleasure, but such thrilling perpetuity of pure emotion, such lofty subject for scientific speculation, and such deep lessons of natural religion, as only the work of a Deity can impress, and only the spirit of an immortal can feel:

they should remember that the slightest deformity, the most contemptible excrescence, can injure the effect of the noblest natural scenery, as a note of discord can annihilate the expression of the purest harmony; that thus it is in the power of worms to conceal, to destroy, or to violate, what angels could not restore, create or consecrate; and that the right, which every man unquestionably possesses, to be an ass, is extended only, in public, to those who are innocent in idiotism, not to the more malicious clowns, who thrust their degraded motley conspicuously forth amidst the fair colors of earth, and mix their incoherent cries with the melodies of eternity, break with their inane laugh upon the silence which Creation keeps where Omnipotence passes most visibly, and scramble over with the characters of idiocy the pages that have been written by the finger of God.

175. These feelings we would endeavor to impress upon all persons likely to have anything to do with embellishing, as it is called, fine natural scenery; as they might, in some degree, convince both the architect and his employer of the danger of giving free play to the imagination in cases involving intricate questions of feeling and composition, and might persuade the designer of the necessity of looking, not to his own acre of land, or to his own peculiar tastes, but to the whole mass of forms and combination of impressions with which he is surrounded.

176. Let us suppose, however, that the design is yielded entirely to the architect's discretion. Being a piece of domestic architecture, the chief object in its exterior design will be to arouse domestic feelings, which, as we saw before, it will do most distinctly by corresponding with the first part of character. Yet it is still more necessary that it should correspond with its situation; and hence arises another difficulty, the reconciliation of correspondence with contraries; for such, it is deeply to be regretted, are too often the individual's mind, and the dwelling-place it chooses. The polished courtier brings his refinement and duplicity with him to ape the Arcadian rustic in Devonshire; the romantic rhymer takes a

plastered habitation, with one back window looking into the Green Park; the soft votary of luxury endeavors to rise at seven, in some Ultima Thule of frosts and storms; and the rich stock-jobber calculates his percentages among the soft dingles and woody shores of Westmoreland. When the architect finds this to be the case, he must, of course, content himself with suiting his design to such a mind as ought to be where the intruder's is; for the feelings which are so much at variance with themselves in the choice of situation, will not be found too critical of their domicile, however little suited to their temper.

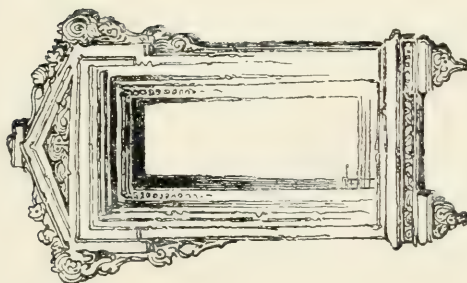
177. If possible, however, he should aim at something more; he should draw his employer into general conversation; observe the bent of his disposition, and the habits of his mind; notice every manifestation of fixed opinions, and then transfer to his architecture as much of the feeling he has observed as is distinct in its operation. This he should do, not because the general spectator will be aware of the aptness of the building, which, knowing nothing of its inmate, he cannot be; nor to please the individual himself, which it is a chance if any simple design ever will, and who never will find out how well his character has been fitted; but because a portrait is always more spirited than a composed countenance; and because this study of human passions will bring a degree of energy, unity, and originality into every one of his designs (all of which will necessarily be different), so simple, so domestic, and so lifelike, as to strike every spectator with an interest and a sympathy, for which he will be utterly unable to account, and to impress on him a perception of something more ethereal than stone or carving, somewhat similar to that which some will remember having felt disagreeably in their childhood, on looking at any old house authentically haunted. The architect will forget in his study of life the formalities of science, and, while his practiced eye will prevent him from erring in technicalities, he will advance, with the ruling feeling, which, in masses of mind, is nationality, to the conception of something truly original, yet perfectly pure.

178. He will also find his advantage in having obtained a guide in the invention of decorations of which, as we shall show, we would have many more in English villas than economy at present allows. Candidus * complains, in his Note Book, that Elizabethan architecture is frequently adopted, because it is easy, with a pair of scissors, to derive a zigzag ornament from a doubled piece of paper. But we would fain hope that none of our professional architects have so far lost sight of the meaning of their art, as to believe that roughening stone mathematically is bestowing decoration, though we are too sternly convinced that they believe mankind to be more shortsighted by at least thirty yards than they are; for they think of nothing but general effect in their ornaments, and lay on their flower-work so carelessly, that a good substantial captain's biscuit, with the small holes left by the penetration of the baker's four fingers, encircling the large one which testifies of the forcible passage of his thumb, would form quite as elegant a rosette as hundreds now perpetuated in stone.

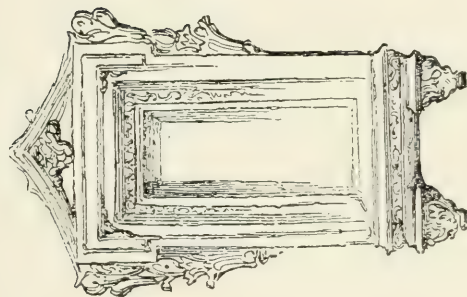
179. Now, there is nothing which requires study so close, or experiment so frequent, as the proper designing of ornament. For its use and position some definite rules may be given; but, when the space and position have been determined, the lines of curvature, the breadth, depth, and sharpness of the shadows to be obtained, the junction of the parts of a group, and the general expression, will present questions for the solution of which the study of years will sometimes scarcely be sufficient; † for they depend upon the feeling of the eye and hand, and there is nothing like perfection in decoration, nothing which, in all probability, might not, by farther consideration, be improved. Now, in cases in which the outline and larger masses are determined by situation, the

[* A contributor to the "Architectural Magazine."]

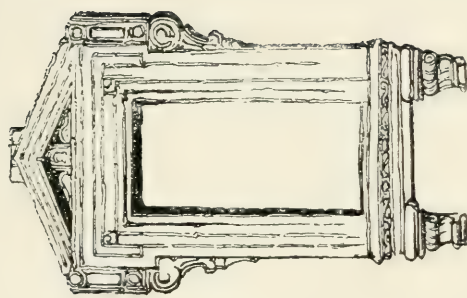
† For example, we would allow one of the modern builders of Gothic chapels a month of invention, and a botanic garden to work from, with perfect certainty that he would not, at the expiration of the time, be able to present us with one design of leafage equal in beauty to hundreds we could point out in the capitals and niches of Melrose and Roslin.



A.



B.



C.

Fig. 13. Windows.

architect will frequently find it necessary to fall back upon his decorations, as the only means of obtaining character; and that which before was an unmeaning lump of jagged freestone, will become a part of expression, an accessory of beautiful design, varied in its form, and delicate in its effect. Then, instead of shrinking from his bits of ornament, as from things which will give him trouble to invent, and will answer no other purpose than that of occupying what would otherwise have looked blank, the designer will view them as an efficient *corps de reserve*, to be brought up when the eye comes to close quarters with the edifice, to maintain and deepen the impression it has previously received. Much more time will be spent in the conception, much more labor in the execution, of such meaning ornaments, but both will be well spent and well rewarded.

180. Perhaps our meaning may be made more clear by Fig. 13 A, which is that of a window found in a domestic building of mixed and corrupt architecture, at Munich (which we give now, because we shall have occasion to allude to it hereafter). Its absurd breadth of molding, so disproportionate to its cornice, renders it excessively ugly, but capable of great variety of effect. It forms one of a range of four, turning an angle, whose moldings join each other, their double breadth being the whole separation of the apertures, which are something more than double squares. Now by alteration of the decoration, and depth of shadow, we have B and C. These three windows differ entirely in their feeling and manner, and are broad examples of such distinctions of style as might be adopted severally in the habitations of the man of imagination, the man of intellect and the man of feeling.* If our alterations have been properly made, there will be no difficulty in distinguishing between their expressions, which we shall therefore leave to conjecture. The character of A depends upon the softness with which the light is caught upon its ornaments, which should not have a

[* Though not in this order. C is the intellectual window; B, the imaginative one.]

single hard line in them; and on the gradual, unequal, but intense, depth of its shadows. B should have all its forms undefined, and passing into one another, the touches of the chisel light, a grotesque face or feature occurring in parts, the shadows pale, but broad*; and the boldest part of the carving kept in shadow rather than light. The third should be hard in its lines, strong in its shades, and quiet in its ornament.

181. These hints will be sufficient to explain our meaning, and we have not space to do more, as the object of these papers is rather to observe than to advise. Besides, in questions of expression so intricate, it is almost impossible to advance fixed principles; every mind will have perceptions of its own, which will guide its speculations, every hand, and eye, and peculiar feeling, varying even from year to year. We have only started the subject of correspondence with individual character, because we think that imaginative minds might take up the idea with some success, as furnishing them with a guide in the variation of their designs, more certain than mere experiment on unmeaning forms, or than ringing indiscriminate changes on component parts of established beauty. To the reverie, rather than the investigation, to the dream, rather than the deliberation, of the architect, we recommend it, as a branch of art in which instinct will do more than precept, and inspiration than technicality. The correspondence of our villa architecture with our natural scenery may be determined with far greater accuracy, and will require careful investigation.

* It is too much the custom to consider a design as composed of a certain number of hard lines, instead of a certain number of shadows of various depth and dimension. Though these shadows change their position in the course of the day, they are relatively always the same. They have most variety under a strong light without sun, most expression with the sun. A little observation of the infinite variety of shade which the sun is capable of casting, as it touches projections of different curve and character, will enable the designer to be certain of his effects. We shall have occasion to allude to this subject again. [See *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, III. 13, 23.]

We had hoped to have concluded the Villa in this paper; but the importance of domestic architecture at the present day, when people want houses more than fortresses, safes more than keeps, and sculleries more than dungeons, is sufficient apology for delay.

OXFORD, *August*, 1838.

VI.

THE BRITISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

The Cultivated, or Blue Country and the Wooded, or Green Country.

182. IN the papers hitherto devoted to the investigation of villa architecture, we have contemplated the beauties of what may be considered as its model, in its original and natural territory; and we have noticed the difficulties to be encountered in the just erection of villas in England. It remains only to lay down the general principles of composition, which in such difficulties may, in some degree, serve as a guide. Into more than general principles it is not consistent with our plan to enter. One obstacle, which was more particularly noticed, was, as it may be remembered, the variety of the geological formations of the country. This will compel us to use the divisions of landscape formerly adopted in speaking of the cottage, and to investigate severally the kind of domestic architecture required by each.

183. First. Blue or cultivated country, which is to be considered as including those suburban districts, in the neighborhood of populous cities, which, though more frequently black than blue, possess the activity, industry, and life, which we before noticed as one of the characteristics of blue country. We shall not, however, allude to suburban villas at present; first, because they are in country possessing nothing which can be spoiled by anything; and, secondly, because their close association renders them subject to laws which, being altogether different from those by which we are to judge of the beauty of solitary villas, we shall have to develop in the consideration of street effects.

184. Passing over the suburb, then, we have to distinguish between the *simple* blue country, which is composed only of rich cultivated champaign, relieved in parts by low undulations, monotonous and uninteresting as a whole, though cheerful in its character, and beautiful in details of lanes and meadow paths; and the *picturesque* blue country, lying at the foot of high hill ranges, intersected by their outworks, broken here and there into bits of crag and dingle scenery; perpetually presenting prospects of exquisite distant beauty, and possessing in its valley and river scenery, fine detached specimens of the natural “green country.” This distinction we did not make in speaking of the cottage; the effect of which, owing to its size, can extend only over a limited space; and this space, if in picturesque blue country, must be either part of its monotonous cultivation, when it is to be considered as belonging to the simple blue country, or part of its dingle scenery, when it becomes green country; and it would not be just, to suit a cottage, actually placed in one color, to the general effect of another color, with which it could have nothing to do. But the effect of the villa extends very often over a considerable space, and becomes part of the large features of the district; so that the whole character and expression of the visible landscape must be considered, and thus the distinction between the two kinds of blue country becomes absolutely necessary. Of the first, or simple, we have already adduced, as an example, the greater part of the South of England. Of the second, or picturesque, the cultivated parts of the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, generally Shropshire, and the north of Lancashire, and Cumberland, beyond Caldbeck Fells, are good examples; perhaps better than all, the country for twelve miles north, and thirty south, east, and west, of Stirling.

A. *The Simple Blue Country.*

185. Now, the matter-of-fact business-like activity of simple blue country has been already alluded to. This attribute renders in it a plain palpable brick dwelling-house

allowable; though a thing which, in every country but the simple blue, compels every spectator of any feeling to send up aspirations, that builders who, like those of Babel, have brick for stone, may be put, like those of Babel, to confusion. Here, however, it is not only allowable, but even agreeable, for the following reasons:—

186. Its cleanness and freshness of color, admitting of little dampness or staining, firm in its consistence, not molding like stone, and therefore inducing no conviction of antiquity or decay, presents rather the appearance of such comfort as is contrived for the enjoyment of temporary wealth, than of such solidity as is raised for the inheritance of unfluctuating power. It is thus admirably suited for that country where all is change, and all activity; where the working and money-making members of the community are perpetually succeeding and overpowering each other; enjoying, each in his turn, the reward of his industry; yielding up the field, the pasture, and the mine, to his successor, and leaving no more memory behind him, no farther evidence of his individual existence, than is left by a working bee, in the honey for which we thank his class, forgetting the individual. The simple blue country may, in fact, be considered the dining-table of the nation: from which it provides for its immediate necessities, at which it feels only its present existence, and in which it requires, not a piece of furniture adapted only to remind it of past refection, but a polished, clean, and convenient minister to its immediate wishes. No habitation, therefore, in this country, should look old: it should give an impression of present prosperity, of swift motion and high energy of life; too rapid in its successive operation to attain greatness, or allow of decay, in its works. This is the first cause which, in this country, renders brick allowable.

187. Again, wherever the soil breaks out in simple blue country, whether in the river shore, or the broken roadside bank, or the plowed field, in nine cases out of ten it is excessively warm in its color, being either gravel or clay, the black vegetable soil never remaining free of vegetation. The warm

tone of these beds of soil is an admirable relief to the blue of the distances, which we have taken as the distinctive feature of the country, tending to produce the perfect light without which no landscape can be complete. Therefore the red of the brick is prevented from glaring upon the eye, by its falling in with similar colors in the ground, and contrasting finely with the general tone of the distance. This is another instance of the material which nature most readily furnishes being the right one. In almost all blue country, we have only to turn out a few spadefuls of loose soil, and we come to the bed of clay, which is the best material for the building; whereas we should have to travel hundreds of miles, or to dig thousands of feet, to get the stone which nature does not want, and therefore has not given.

188. Another excellence in brick is its perfect air of English respectability. It is utterly impossible for an edifice altogether of brick to look affected or absurd: it may look rude, it may look vulgar, it may look disgusting, in a wrong place; but it cannot look foolish, for it is incapable of pretension. We may suppose its master a brute, or an ignoramus, but we can never suppose him a coxcomb: a bear he may be, a fop he cannot be; and, if we find him out of his place, we feel that it is owing to error, not to impudence; to self-ignorance, not to self-conceit; to the want, not the assumption of feeling. It is thus that brick is peculiarly English in its effect: for we are brutes in many things, and we are ignoramuses in many things, and we are destitute of feeling in many things, but we are *not* coxcombs. It is only by the utmost effort, that some of our most highly gifted junior gentlemen can attain such distinction of title; and even then the honor sits ill upon them: they are but awkward coxcombs. Affectation * never was, and never will be, a part of English

* The nation, indeed, possesses one or two interesting individuals, whose affectation is, as we have seen, strikingly manifested in their lake villas: but every rule has its exceptions; and, even on these gifted personages, the affectation sits so very awkwardly, so like a velvet bonnet on a plowman's carrotty hair, that it is evidently a late acquisition. Thus,

character; we have too much national pride, too much consciousness of our own dignity and power, too much established self-satisfaction, to allow us to become ridiculous by imitative efforts; and, as it is only by endeavoring to appear what he is not, that a man ever can become so, properly speaking, our true-witted Continental neighbors, who shrink from John Bull as a brute, never laugh at him as a fool. "*Il est bête, il n'est pas pourtant sot.*"

189. The brick house admirably corresponds with this part of English character; for, unable as it is to be beautiful, or graceful, or dignified, it is equally unable to be absurd. There is a proud independence about it, which seems conscious of its entire and perfect applicability to those uses for which it was built, and full of a good-natured intention to render every one who seeks shelter within its walls excessively comfortable; it therefore feels awkward in no company; and, wherever it intrudes its good-humored red face, stares plaster and marble out of countenance with an insensible audacity, which we drive out of such refined company, as we would a clown from a drawing-room, but which we nevertheless seek in its own place, as we would seek the conversation of the clown in his own turnip-field, if he were sensible in the main.

190. Lastly. Brick is admirably adapted for the climate of England, and for the frequent manufacturing nuisances of English blue country: for the smoke, which makes marble look like charcoal, and stucco like mud, only renders brick less glaring in its color; and the inclement climate, which makes the composition front look as if its architect had been amusing himself by throwing buckets of green water down from the roof, and before which the granite base of Stirling one proprietor of land on Windermere, who has built unto himself a castellated mansion with round towers, and a Swiss cottage for a stable, has yet, with that admiration of the "neat but not gaudy," which is commonly reported to have influenced the devil when he painted his tail pea green, painted the rocks at the back of his house pink, that they may look clean. This is a little outcrop of English feeling in the midst of the assumed romance.

Castle is moldering into sand as impotent as ever was ribbed by ripple, wreaks its rage in vain upon the bits of baked clay, leaving them strong, and dry, and stainless, warm and comfortable in their effect, even when neglect has permitted the moss and wall-flower to creep into their crannies, and mellow into something like beauty that which is always comfort. Damp, which fills many stones as it would a sponge, is defied by the brick; and the warmth of every gleam of sunshine is caught by it, and stored up for future expenditure; so that, both actually and in its effect, it is peculiarly suited for a climate whose changes are in general from bad to worse, and from worse to bad.

191. These then are the principal apologies which the brick dwelling-house has to offer for its ugliness. They will, however, only stand it in stead in the simple blue country; and, even there, only when the following points are observed.

First. The brick should neither be of the white, nor the very dark red, kind. The white is worse than useless as a color: its cold, raw, sandy neutral has neither warmth enough to relieve, nor gray enough to harmonize with, any natural tones; it does not please the eye by warmth, in shade; it hurts it, by dry heat in sun; it has none of the advantages of effect which brick may have, to compensate for the vulgarity which it must have, and is altogether to be abhorred. The very bright red, again, is one of the ugliest warm colors that art ever stumbled upon: it is never mellowed by damps or anything else, and spoils everything near it by its intolerable and inevitable glare. The moderately dark brick, of a neutral red, is to be chosen, and this, after a year or two, will be farther softened in its color by atmospheric influence, and will possess all the advantages we have enumerated. It is almost unnecessary to point out its fitness for a damp situation, not only as the best material for securing the comfort of the inhabitant, but because it will the sooner contract a certain degree of softness of tone, occasioned by microscopic vegetation, which will leave no more brick-red than is agreeable to the feelings where the atmosphere is chill.

192. Secondly. Even this kind of red is a very powerful color; and as, in combination with the other primitive colors, very little of it will complete the light, so, very little will answer every purpose in landscape composition, and every addition, above that little, will be disagreeable. Brick, therefore, never should be used in large groups of buildings, where those groups are to form part of landscape scenery: two or three houses, partly shaded with trees, are all that can be admitted at once. There is no object more villainously destructive of natural beauty, than a large town, of very red brick, with very scarlet tiling, very tall chimneys, and very few trees; while there are few objects that harmonize more agreeably with the feeling of English ordinary landscape, than the large, old, solitary, brick manor house, with its group of dark cedars on the lawn in front, and the tall wrought-iron gates opening down the avenue of approach.

193. Thirdly. No stone quoining, or presence of any contrasting color, should be admitted. Quoins in general (though, by the by, they are prettily managed in the old Tolbooth of Glasgow, and some other antique buildings in Scotland), are only excusable as giving an appearance of strength; while their zigzag monotony, when rendered conspicuous by difference of color, is altogether detestable. White cornices, niches, and the other superfluous introductions in stone and plaster, which some architects seem to think ornamental, only mock what they cannot mend, take away the whole expression of the edifice, render the brick-red glaring and harsh, and become themselves ridiculous in isolation. Besides, as a general principle, contrasts of extensive color are to be avoided in all buildings, and especially in positive and unmanageable tints. It is difficult to imagine whence the custom of putting stone ornaments into brick buildings could have arisen; unless it be an imitation of the Italian custom of mixing marble with stucco, which affords it no sanction, as the marble is only distinguishable from the general material by the sharpness of the carved edges. The Dutch seem to have been the originators of the custom; and,

by the by, if we remember right, in one of the very finest pieces of coloring now extant, a landscape by Rubens (in the gallery at Munich, we think), the artist seems to have sanctioned the barbarism, by introducing a brick edifice, with white stone quoining. But the truth is that he selected the subject, partly under the influence of domestic feelings, the place being, as it is thought, his own habitation, and partly as a piece of practice, presenting such excessive difficulties of color, as he, the lord of color, who alone could overcome them, would peculiarly delight in overcoming; and the harmony with which he has combined tints of the most daring force, and sharpest apparent contrast, in the edgy building, and opposed them to an uninteresting distance of excessive azure (simple blue country, observe), is one of the chief wonders of the painting: so that this masterpiece can no more furnish an apology for the continuance of a practice which, though it gives some liveliness of character to the warehouses of Amsterdam, is fit only for a place whose foundations are mud, and whose inhabitants are partially animated cheeses,—than Caravaggio's custom of painting blackguards should introduce an ambition among mankind in general of becoming fit subjects for his pencil. We shall have occasion again to allude to this subject, in speaking of Dutch street effects.

194. Fourthly. It will generally be found to agree best with the business-like air of the blue country, if the house be excessively simple, and apparently altogether the minister of utility; but, where it is to be extensive, or tall, a few decorations about the upper windows are desirable. These should be quiet and severe in their lines, and cut boldly in the brick itself. Some of the minor streets in the King of Sardinia's capital are altogether of brick, very richly charged with carving, with excellent effect, and furnish a very good model. Of course no delicate ornament can be obtained, and no classical lines can be allowed; for we should be horrified by seeing that in brick which we have been accustomed to see in marble. The architect must be left to his own taste for laying

on, sparingly and carefully, a few dispositions of well proportioned line, which are all that can ever be required.

195. These broad principles are all that need be attended to in simple blue country: anything will look well in it which is not affected; and the architect, who keeps comfort and utility steadily in view, and runs off into no expatiations of fancy, need never be afraid here of falling into error.

B. The Picturesque Blue Country.

196. But the case is different with the picturesque blue country.* Here, owing to the causes mentioned in the notes at p. 71, we have some of the most elevated bits of landscape character, which the country, whatever it may be, can afford. Its first and most distinctive peculiarity is its grace; it is all undulation and variety of line, one curve passing into another with the most exquisite softness, rolling away into faint and far outlines of various depth and decision, yet none hard or harsh; and in all probability, rounded off in the near ground into massy forms of partially wooded hill, shaded downwards into winding dingles or cliffy ravines, each form melting imperceptibly into the next, without an edge or angle.

197. Its next character is mystery. It is a country peculiarly distinguished by its possessing features of great sublimity in the distance, without giving any hint in the foreground of their actual nature. A range of mountain, seen from a mountain peak, may have sublimity, but not the mystery with which it is invested, when seen rising over the farthest surge of misty blue, where everything near is soft and smiling, totally separated in nature from the consolidated clouds of the horizon. The picturesque blue country is sure, from the nature of the ground, to present some distance of this kind, so as never to be without a high and ethereal mystery.

* In leaving simple blue country, we hope it need hardly be said that we leave bricks at once and forever. Nothing can excuse them out of their proper territory.

198. The third and last distinctive attribute is sensuality. This is a startling word, and requires some explanation. In the first place, every line is voluptuous, floating, and wavy in its form; deep, rich, and exquisitely soft in its color; drowsy in its effect; like slow wild music; letting the eye repose on it, as on a wreath of cloud, without one feature of harshness to hurt, or of contrast to awaken. In the second place, the cultivation, which, in the simple blue country, has the forced formality of growth which evidently is to supply the necessities of man, here seems to leap into the spontaneous luxuriance of life, which is fitted to minister to his pleasures. The surface of the earth exults with animation, especially tending to the gratification of the senses; and, without the artificialness which reminds man of the necessity of his own labor, without the opposing influences which call for his resistance, without the vast energies that remind him of his impotence, without the sublimity that can call his noblest thoughts into action, yet, with every perfection that can tempt him to indolence of enjoyment, and with such abundant bestowal of natural gifts, as might seem to prevent that indolence from being its own punishment, the earth appears to have become a garden of delight, wherein the sweep of the bright hills, without chasm or crag, the flow of the bending rivers, without rock or rapid, and the fruitfulness of the fair earth, without care or labor on the part of its inhabitants, appeal to the most pleasant passions of eye and sense, calling for no effort of body, and impressing no fear on the mind. In hill country we have a struggle to maintain with the elements; in simple blue, we have not the luxuriance of delight: here, and here only, all nature combines to breathe over us a lulling slumber, through which life degenerates into sensation.

199. These considerations are sufficient to explain what we mean by the epithet "sensuality." Now, taking these three distinctive attributes, the mysterious, the graceful, and the voluptuous, what is the whole character? Very nearly—the Greek: for these attributes, common to all picturesque

blue country, are modified in the degree of their presence by every climate. In England they are all low in their tone; but as we go southward, the voluptuousness becomes deeper in feeling as the colors of the earth and the heaven become purer and more passionate, and "the purple of ocean deepest of dye;" the mystery becomes mightier, for the greater and more universal energy of the beautiful permits its features to come nearer, and to rise into the sublime, without causing fear. It is thus that we get the essence of the Greek feeling, as it was embodied in their finest imaginations, as it showed itself in the works of their sculptors and their poets, in which sensation was made almost equal with thought, and deified by its nobility of association; at once voluptuous, refined, dreamily mysterious, infinitely beautiful. Hence, it appears that the spirit of this blue country is essentially Greek; though, in England and in other northern localities, that spirit is possessed by it in a diminished and degraded degree. It is also the natural dominion of the villa, possessing all the attributes which attracted the Romans, when, in their hours of idleness, they lifted the light arches along the echoing promontories of Tiber. It is especially suited to the expression of the edifice of pleasure; and, therefore, is most capable of being adorned by it.

200. The attention of every one about to raise himself a villa of any kind should, therefore, be directed to this kind of country; first, as that in which he will not be felt to be an intruder; secondly, as that which will, in all probability, afford him the greatest degree of continuous pleasure, when his eye has become accustomed to the features of the locality. To the human mind, as on the average constituted, the features of hill scenery will, by repetition, become tiresome, and of wood scenery, monotonous; while the simple blue can possess little interest of any kind. Powerful intellect will generally take perpetual delight in hill residence; but the general mind soon feels itself oppressed with a peculiar melancholy and weariness, which it is ashamed to own; and we hear our romantic gentlemen begin to call out about the want

of society, while, if the animals were fit to live where they have forced themselves, they would never want more society than that of a gray stone, or of a clear pool of gushing water. On the other hand, there are few minds so degraded as not to feel greater pleasure in the picturesque blue than in any other country. Its distance has generally grandeur enough to meet their moods of aspiration; its near aspect is that of a more human interest than that of hill country, and harmonizes more truly with the domestic feelings which are common to all mankind; so that, on the whole, it will be found to maintain its freshness of beauty to the habituated eye, in a greater degree than any other scenery.

201. As it thus persuades us to inhabit it, it becomes a point of honor not to make the attractiveness of its beauty its destruction; especially as, being the natural dominion of the villa, it affords great opportunity for the architect to exhibit variety of design.

Its spirit has been proved to be Greek; and therefore, though that spirit is slightly manifested in Britain, and though every good architect is shy of importation, villas on Greek and Roman models are admissible here. Still, as in all blue country there is much activity of life, the principle of utility should be kept in view, and the building should have as much simplicity as can be united with perfect gracefulness of line. It appears from the principles of composition alluded to in speaking of the Italian villa, that in undulating country the forms should be square and massy; and, where the segments of curves are small, the buildings should be low and flat, while they may be prevented from appearing cumbrous by some well-managed irregularity of design, which will be agreeable to the inhabitant as well as to the spectator; enabling him to change the aspect and size of his chamber, as temperature or employment may render such change desirable, without being foiled in his design, by finding the apartments of one wing matched, foot to foot, by those of the other.

202. For the color, it has been shown that white or pale

tints are agreeable in all blue country: but there must be warmth in it, and a great deal too,—gray being comfortless and useless with a cold distance; but it must not be raw or glaring.* The roof and chimneys should be kept out of sight as much as possible; and therefore the one very flat, and the other very plain. We ought to revive the Greek custom of roofing with thin slabs of coarse marble, cut into the form of tiles. However, where the architect finds he has a very cool distance, and few trees about the building, and where it stands so high as to preclude the possibility of its being looked down upon, he will, if he be courageous, use a very flat roof of the dark Italian tile. The eaves, which are all that should be seen, will be peculiarly graceful; and the sharp contrast of color (for this tiling can only be admitted with white walls) may be altogether avoided, by letting them cast a strong shadow, and by running the walls up into a range of low garret windows, to break the horizontal line of the roof. He will thus obtain a bit of very strong color, which will impart a general glow of cheerfulness to the building, and which, if he manages it rightly, will not be

* The epithet "raw," by the by, is vague, and needs definition. Every tint is raw which is perfectly opaque, and has not all the three primitive colors in its composition. Thus, black is always raw, because it has no color; white never, because it has all colors. No tint can be raw which is not opaque; and opacity may be taken away, either by actual depth and transparency, as in the sky; by luster and texture, as in the case of silk and velvet, or by variety of shade as in forest verdure. Two instances will be sufficient to prove the truth of this. Brick, when first fired, is always raw; but when it has been a little weathered, it acquires a slight blue tint, assisted by the gray of the mortar: incipient vegetation affords it the yellow. It thus obtains an admixture of the three colors, and is raw no longer. An old woman's red cloak, though glaring, is never raw; for it must of necessity have folded shades: those shades are of a rich gray; no gray can exist without yellow and blue. We have then three colors, and no rawness. It must be observed however, that when any one of the colors is given in so slight a degree that it can be overpowered by certain effects of light, the united color, when opaque, will be raw. Thus many flesh-colors are raw; because, though they must have a little blue in their composition, it is too little to be efficiently visible in a strong light.

glaring nor intrusive. It is to be observed, however, that he can only do this with villas of the most humble order, and that he will seldom find his employer possessed of so much common sense as to put up with a tile roof. When this is the case, the flat slabs of the upper limestone (ragstone) are usually better than slate.

203. For the rest, it is always to be kept in view, that the prevailing character of the whole is to be that of graceful simplicity; distinguished from the simplicity of the Italian edifice, by being that of utility instead of that of pride.* Consequently the building must *not* be Gothic or Elizabethan: it may be as commonplace as the proprietor likes, provided its proportions be good; but nothing can ever excuse one acute angle, or one decorated pinnacle,—both being direct interruption of the repose with which the eye is indulged by the undulations of the surrounding scenery. Tower and fortress outlines are indeed agreeable, for their fine grouping and roundness; but we do not allude to them, because nothing can be more absurd than the humor prevailing at the present day among many of our peaceable old gentlemen, who never smelt powder in **their** lives, to eat their morning muffin in a savage-looking round tower, and admit quiet old ladies to a tea-party under the range of twenty-six cannon, which—it is lucky for the china—are all wooden ones,—as they are, in all probability, accurately and awfully pointed into the drawing-room windows.

So much then for our British blue country, to which it was necessary to devote some time, as occupying a considerable portion of the island, and being peculiarly well adapted for villa residences.

* There must always be a difficulty in building in picturesque blue country in England; for the English character is opposed to that of the country: it is neither graceful, nor mysterious, nor voluptuous; therefore, what we cede to the country, we take from the nationality, and *vice versâ*.

C. The Woody or Green Country.

204. The woody, or green country, which is next in order, was spoken of before, and was shown to be especially our own. The Elizabethan was pointed out as the style peculiarly belonging to it; and farther criticism of that style was deferred until we came to the consideration of domestic buildings provided with the means of defense. We have therefore at present only to offer a few remarks on the principles to be observed in the erection of Elizabethan villas at the present day.

205. First. The building must be either quite chaste, or excessively rich in decoration. Every inch of ornament short of a certain quantity will render the whole effect poor and ridiculous; while the pure perpendicular lines of this architecture will always look well if left entirely alone. The architect therefore, when limited as to expense, should content himself with making his oriels project boldly, channeling their mullions richly, and, in general, rendering his vertical lines delicate and beautiful in their workmanship; but, if his estimate be unlimited, he should lay on his ornament richly, taking care never to confuse the eye.

Those parts to which, of necessity, observation is especially directed, must be finished so as to bear a close scrutiny, that the eye may rest on them with satisfaction: but their finish must not be of a character which would have attracted the eye by itself, without being placed in a conspicuous situation; for, if it were, the united attraction of form and detail would confine the contemplation altogether to the parts so distinguished, and render it impossible for the mind to receive any impression of general effect.

Consequently, the parts that project, and are to bear a strong light, must be chiseled with infinite delicacy; so that the ornament, though it would have remained unobserved had the eye not been guided to it, when observed, may be of distinguished beauty and power; but those parts which are to be

flat and in shade should be marked with great sharpness and boldness, that the impression may be equalized.

When, for instance, we have to do with oriels, to which attention is immediately attracted by their projection, we may run wreaths of the finest flower-work up the mullions, charge the terminations with shields, and quarter them richly; but we must join the window to the wall, where its shadow falls, by means of more deep and decided decoration.

206. Secondly. In the choice and design of his ornaments, the architect should endeavor to be grotesque rather than graceful (though little bits of soft flower-work here and there will relieve the eye): but he must not imagine he can be grotesque by carving faces with holes for eyes and knobs for noses; on the contrary, whenever he mimics grotesque life, there should be wit and humor in every feature, fun and frolic in every attitude; every distortion should be anatomical, and every monster a studied combination. This is a question, however, relating more nearly to Gothic architecture and therefore we shall not enter into it at present.*

207. Thirdly. The gables must on no account be jagged into a succession of right angles, as if people were to be perpetually engaged in trotting up one side and down the other. This custom, though sanctioned by authority, has very little apology to offer for itself, based on any principle of composition. In street effect indeed it is occasionally useful; and where the verticals below are unbroken by ornament, may be used even in the detached Elizabethan, but not when decoration has been permitted below. They should then be carried up in curved lines, alternating with two angles, or three at the most, without pinnacles or hipknobs. A hollow parapet is far better than a battlement, in the intermediate spaces; the latter indeed is never allowable, except when the building has some appearance of being intended for defense, and therefore is generally barbarous in the villa; while the parapet admits of great variety of effect.

208. Lastly. Though the grotesque of Elizabethan archi-

[* See *Stones of Venice*, vol. III. chap. iii.]

ture is adapted for wood country, the grotesque of the clipped garden, which frequently accompanies it, is not. The custom of clipping trees into fantastic forms is always to be reprehended: first, because it never can produce the true grotesque, for the material is not passive, and, therefore, a perpetual sense of restraint is induced, while the great principle of the grotesque is action; again, because we have a distinct perception of two natures, the one neutralizing the other; for the vegetable organization is too palpable to let the animal form suggest its true idea; again, because the great beauty of all foliage is the energy of life and action, of which it loses the appearance by formal clipping; and again, because the hands of the gardener will never produce anything really spirited or graceful. Much, however, need not be said on this subject; for the taste of the public does not now prompt them to such fettering of fair freedom, and we should be as sorry to see the characteristic vestiges of it, which still remain in a few gardens, lost altogether, as to see the thing again becoming common.

209. The garden of the Elizabethan villa, then, should be laid out with a few simple terraces near the house, so as to unite it well with the ground; lines of balustrade along the edges, guided away into the foliage of the taller trees of the garden, with the shadows falling at intervals. The balusters should be square rather than round, with the angles outward; and if the balustrade looks unfinished at the corners, it may be surmounted by a grotesque bit of sculpture, of any kind; but it must be very strong and deep in its carved lines, and must not be large; and all graceful statues are to be avoided, for the reasons mentioned in speaking of the Italian villa: neither is the terraced part of the garden to extend to any distance from the house, nor to have deep flights of steps, for they are sure to get mossy and slippery, if not superintended with troublesome care; and the rest of the garden should have more trees than flowers in it. A flower-garden is an ugly thing, even when best managed: it is an assembly of unfortunate beings, pampered and bloated above their nat-

ural size, stewed and heated into diseased growth; corrupted by evil communication into speckled and inharmonious colors; torn from the soil which they loved, and of which they were the spirit and the glory, to glare away their term of tormented life among the mixed and incongruous essences of each other, in earth that they know not, and in air that is poison to them.

210. The florist may delight in this: the true lover of flowers never will. He who has taken lessons from nature, who has observed the real purpose and operation of flowers; how they flush forth from the brightness of the earth's being, as the melody rises up from among the moved strings of the instrument; how the wildness of their pale colors passes over her, like the evidence of a various emotion; how the quick fire of their life and their delight glows along the green banks, where the dew falls the thickest, and the mists of incense pass slowly through the twilight of the leaves, and the intertwined roots make the earth tremble with strange joy at the feeling of their motion; he who has watched this will never take away the beauty of their being to mix into meretricious glare, or feed into an existence of disease. And the flower-garden is as ugly in effect as it is unnatural in feeling: it never will harmonize with anything, and if people will have it, should be kept out of sight till they get into it.

211. But, in laying out the garden which is to assist the effect of the building, we must observe, and exclusively use, the natural combinations of flowers.* Now, as far as we are aware, bluish purple is the only flower color which Nature

* Every one who is about to lay out a limited extent of garden, in which he wishes to introduce many flowers, should read and attentively study, first Shelley, and next Shakspeare. The latter indeed induces the most beautiful connections between thought and flower that can be found in the whole range of European literature; but he very often uses the symbolical effect of the flower, which it can only have on the educated mind, instead of the natural and true effect of the flower, which it must have, more or less, upon every mind. Thus, when Ophelia, presenting her wild flowers, says, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts;" the in-

ever uses in masses of distant effect; this, however, she does in the case of most heathers, with the *Rhododendron ferrugineum*, and, less extensively, with the colder color of the wood hyacinth. Accordingly, the large rhododendron may be used to almost any extent, in masses; the pale varieties of the rose more sparingly; and, on the turf, the wild violet and pansy should be sown by chance, so that they may grow in undulations of color, and should be relieved by a few primroses. All dahlias, tulips, ranunculi, and, in general, what are called florist's flowers, should be avoided like garlic.

212. Perhaps we should apologize for introducing this in the *Architectural Magazine*; but it is not out of place: the garden is almost a necessary adjunct of the Elizabethan villa, and all garden architecture is utterly useless unless it be assisted by the botanical effect.

These, then, are a few of the more important principles of architecture, which are to be kept in view in the blue and in the green country. The wild, or gray, country is never selected, in Britain, as the site of a villa; and, therefore, it only remains for us to offer a few remarks on a subject as difficult as it is interesting and important, the architecture of the villa in British hill, or brown, country.

finite beauty of the passage depends entirely upon the arbitrary meaning attached to the flowers. But, when Shelley speaks of

"The lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale,
That the light of her tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilion of tender green,"

he is etherealizing an impression which the mind naturally receives from the flower. Consequently, as it is only by their natural influence that flowers can address the mind through the eye, we must read Shelley, to learn how to use flowers, and Shakspeare, to learn to love them. In both writers we find the wild flower possessing soul as well as life, and mingling its influence most intimately, like an untaught melody, with the deepest and most secret streams of human emotion.

VII.

THE BRITISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

D. Hill, or Brown Country.

“*Vivite contenti casulis et collibus istis.*”—Juvenal [xiv. 179.]

213. IN the Boulevard des Italiens, just at the turning into the Rue de la Paix (in Paris), there stand a few dusky and withered trees, beside a kind of dry ditch, paved at the bottom, into which a carriage can with some difficulty descend, and which affords access (not in an unusual manner) to the ground floor of a large and dreary-looking house, whose passages are dark and confined, whose rooms are limited in size, and whose windows command an interesting view of the dusky trees before mentioned.

This is the town residence of one of the Italian noblemen, whose country house has already been figured as a beautiful example of the villas of the Lago di Como. That villa, however, though in one of the loveliest situations that hill, and wave, and heaven ever combined to adorn, and though itself one of the most delicious habitations that luxury ever projected or wealth procured, is very rarely honored by the presence of its master; while attractions of a very different nature retain him, winter after winter, in the dark chambers of the Boulevard des Italiens.

214. This appears singular to the casual traveler, who darts down from the dust and heat of the French capital to the light and glory of the Italian lakes, and finds the tall marble chambers and orange groves, in which he thinks, were he possessed of them, he could luxuriate forever, left

desolate and neglected by their real owner; but, were he to try such a residence for a single twelvemonth, we believe his wonder would have greatly diminished at the end of the time. For the mind of the nobleman in question does not differ from that of the average of men; inasmuch as it is a well-known fact that a series of sublime impressions, continued indefinitely, gradually pall upon the imagination, deaden its fineness of feeling, and in the end induce a gloomy and morbid state of mind, a reaction of a peculiarly melancholy character, because consequent, not upon the absence of that which once caused excitement, but upon the failure of its power.* This is not the case with all men; but with those over whom the sublimity of an unchanging scene can retain its power forever, we have nothing to do; for they know better than any architect can, how to choose their scene, and how to add to its effect; we have only to impress upon them the propriety of thinking before they build, and of keeping their humors under the control of their judgment.

215. It is not of them, but of the man of average intellect, that we are thinking throughout all these papers; and upon him it cannot be too strongly impressed, that there are very few points in a hill country at all adapted for a permanent residence. There is a kind of instinct, indeed, by which men become aware of this, and shrink from the sterner features of hill scenery into the parts possessing a human interest; and thus we find the north side of the Lake Lemman, from Vevay to Geneva, which is about as monotonous a bit of vine-country as any in Europe, studded with villas; while the south side, which is as exquisite a piece of scenery as is to be found in all Switzerland, possesses, we think, two. The instinct in this case is true; but we frequently find it in error. Thus, the Lake of Como is the resort of half Italy, while the Lago Maggiore possesses scarcely one villa of importance, besides those on the Borromean Islands. Yet the Lago Maggiore is far better adapted for producing and sustaining a pleasurable impression, than that of Como.

[* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. III. chap. x. § 15.]

216. The first thing, then, which the architect has to do in hill country is to bring his employer down from heroics to common sense; to teach him that, although it might be very well for a man like Pliny,* whose whole spirit and life was wrapt up in that of Nature, to set himself down under the splash of a cascade 400 feet high, such escapades are not becoming in English gentlemen; and that it is necessary, for his own satisfaction, as well as that of others, that he should keep in the most quiet and least pretending corners of the landscape which he has chosen.

217. Having got his employer well under control, he has two points to consider. First, where he will spoil least; and, secondly, where he will gain most.

Now he may spoil a landscape in two ways: either by destroying an association connected with it, or a beauty inherent in it. With the first barbarism we have nothing to do; for it is one which would not be permitted on a large scale; and even if it were, could not be perpetrated by any man of the slightest education. No one, having any pretensions to be called a human being, would build himself a house on the meadow of the Rütli, or by the farm of La Haye Sainte, or on the lonely isle on Loch Katrine. Of the injustice of the second barbarism we have spoken already; and it is the object of this paper to show how it may be avoided, as well as to develop the principles by which we may be guided in the second question; that of ascertaining how much permanent pleasure will be received from the contemplation of a given scene.

218. It is very fortunate that the result of these several investigations will generally be found the same. The residence which in the end is found altogether delightful, will be found to have been placed where it has committed no injury; and therefore the best way of consulting our own convenience

[* This passage seems to suggest that the Villa Pliniana on Como was built by Pliny. It was, however, the work of an antiquarian nobleman of the Renaissance, and merely named after the great naturalist, who was born, perhaps, at Como, and mentions an ebbing spring on this site.]

in the end is, to consult the feelings of the spectator in the beginning.* Now, the first grand rule for the choice of situation is, never to build a villa where the ground is not richly productive. It is not enough that it should be capable of producing a crop of scanty oats or turnips in a fine season; it must be rich and luxuriant, and glowing with vegetative power of one kind or another.† For the very chiefest ‡ part of the character of the edifice of pleasure is, and must be, its perfect ease, its appearance of felicitous repose. This it can never have where the nature and expression of the land near it reminds us of the necessity of labor, and where the earth is niggardly of all that constitutes its beauty and our pleasure; this it can only have where the presence of man seems the natural consequence of an ample provision for his enjoyment, not the continuous struggle of suffering existence with a rude heaven and rugged soil. There is nobility in such a struggle, but not when it is maintained by the inhabitant of the villa, in whom it is unnatural, and therefore injurious in its effect. The narrow cottage on the desolate moor, or the stalwart hospice on the crest of the Alps, each leaves an ennobling impression of energy and endurance; but the possessor of the villa should call, not upon our admiration, but

* For instance, one proprietor terrifies the landscape all round him, within a range of three miles, by the conspicuous position of his habitation; and is punished by finding that, from whatever quarter the wind may blow, it sends in some of his plate-glass. Another spoils a pretty bit of crag by building below it, and has two or three tons of stone dropped through his roof, the first frosty night. Another occupies the turfy slope of some soft lake promontory, and has his cook washed away by the first flood. We do not remember ever having seen a dwelling-house destroying the effect of a landscape, of which, considered merely as a habitation, we should wish to be the possessor.

† We are not thinking of the effect upon the human frame of the air which is favorable to vegetation. Chemically considered, the bracing breeze of the more sterile soil is the most conducive to health, and is practically so, when the frame is not perpetually exposed to it; but the keenness which checks the growth of the plant is, in all probability, trying, to say the least, to the constitution of a resident.

‡ We hope the English language may long retain this corrupt but energetic superlative.

upon our sympathy; and his function is to deepen the impression of the beauty and the fullness of creation, not to exhibit the majesty of man; to show, in the intercourse of earth and her children, not how her severity may be mocked by their heroism, but how her bounty may be honored in their enjoyment.

219. This position, being once granted, will save us a great deal of trouble; for it will put out of our way, as totally unfit for villa residence, nine-tenths of all mountain scenery; beginning with such bleak and stormy bits of hillside as that which was metamorphosed into something like a forest by the author of "*Waverley*;" laying an equal veto on all the severe landscapes of such districts of minor mountains as the Scotch Highlands and North Wales; and finishing by setting aside all the higher sublimity of Alp and Apennine. What, then, has it left us? The gentle slope of the lake shore, and the spreading parts of the quiet valley in almost all scenery; and the shores of the Cumberland lakes in our own, distinguished as they are by a richness of soil, which, though generally manifested only in an exquisite softness of pasture and roundness of undulation, is sufficiently evident to place them out of the sweeping range of this veto.

220. Now, as we have only to do with Britain at present, we shall direct particular attention to the Cumberland lakes, as they are the only mountain district which, taken generally, is adapted for the villa residence, and as every piece of scenery, which in other districts is so adapted, resembles them in character and tone.

We noticed, in speaking of the Westmoreland cottage, the feeling of humility with which we are impressed during a mountain ramble. Now, it is nearly impossible for a villa of large size, however placed, not to disturb and interrupt this necessary and beautiful impression, particularly where the scenery is on a very small scale. This disadvantage may be obviated in some degree, as we shall see, by simplicity of architecture; but another, dependent on a question of proportion, is inevitable.

221. When an object, in which magnitude is a desirable attribute, leaves an impression, on a practiced eye, of less magnitude than it really possesses, we should place objects beside it, of whose magnitude we can satisfy ourselves, of larger size than that which we are accustomed to; for, by finding these large objects in precisely the proportion to the grand object, to which we *are* accustomed, while we know their actual size to be one to which we are *not* accustomed, we become aware of the true magnitude of the principal feature. But where the object leaves a true impression of its size on the practiced eye, we shall do harm by rendering minor objects either larger or smaller than they usually are. Where the object leaves an impression of greater magnitude than it really possesses, we must render the minor objects smaller than they usually are, to prevent our being undeceived.

222. Now, a mountain of 15,000 feet high always looks lower than it really is; therefore the larger the buildings near it are rendered, the better. Thus, in speaking of the Swiss cottage, it was observed that a building of the size of St. Peter's in its place, would exhibit the size of the mountains more truly and strikingly. A mountain 7000 feet high strikes its impression with great truth; we are deceived on neither side; therefore the building near it should be of the average size; and thus the villas of the Lago di Como, being among hills from 6000 to 8000 feet high, are well proportioned, being neither colossal nor diminutive: but a mountain 3000 feet high always looks higher than it really is; *

* This position, as well as the two preceding, is important, and in need of confirmation. It has often been observed, that, when the eye is altogether unpracticed in estimating elevation, it believes every point to be lower than it really is; but this does not militate against the proposition, for it is also well known, that the higher the point, the greater the deception. But when the eye is thoroughly practiced in mountain measurement, although the judgment, arguing from technical knowledge, gives a true result, the impression on the feelings is always at variance with it, except in hills of the middle height. We are perpetually astonished, in our own country, by the sublime impression left by such hills as Skiddaw,

therefore the buildings near it should be smaller than the average. And this is what is meant by the proportion of objects; namely, rendering them of such relative size as shall produce the greatest possible impression of those attributes which are most desirable in both. It is not the true, but the desirable impression which is to be conveyed; and it must not be in one, but in both: the building must not be overwhelmed by the mass of the mountain, nor the precipice mocked by the elevation of the cottage. (Proportion of color is a question of quite a different nature, dependent merely on admixture and combination).

223. For these reasons, buildings of a very large size are decidedly destructive of effect among the English lakes: first, because apparent altitudes are much diminished by them; and, secondly, because, whatever position they may be placed in, instead of combining with scenery, they occupy and overwhelm it; for all scenery is divided into pieces, each of which has a near bit of beauty, a promontory of lichened crag, or a smooth swarded knoll, or something of the kind, to begin with. Wherever the large villa comes, it takes up one of these beginnings of landscape altogether; and the parts of crag or wood, which ought to combine with it, become sub-

or Cader Idris, or Ben Venue; perpetually vexed, in Switzerland, by finding that, setting aside circumstances of form and color, the abstract impression of elevation is (except in some moments of peculiar effect, worth a king's ransom) inferior to the truth. We were standing the other day on the slope of the Brevent, above the Prieuré of Chamouni, with a companion, well practiced in climbing Highland hills, but a stranger among the Alps. Pointing out a rock above the Glacier des Bossons, we requested an opinion of its height. "I should think," was the reply, "I could climb it in two steps; but I am too well used to hills to be taken in in that way; it is at least 40 feet." The real height was 470 feet. This deception is attributable to several causes (independently of the clearness of the medium through which the object is seen), which it would be out of place to discuss here, but the chief of which is the natural tendency of the feelings always to believe objects subtending the same angle to be of the same height. We say the feelings, not the eye; for the practiced eye never betrays its possessor, though the due and corresponding mental impression is not received.

servient to it, and lost in its general effect; that is, ordinarily, in a general effect of ugliness. This should never be the case: however intrinsically beautiful the edifice may be, it should assist, but not supersede; join, but not eclipse; appear, but not intrude.

224. The general rule by which we are to determine the size is, to select the largest mass which will not overwhelm any object of fine form, within two hundred yards of it; and if it does not do this, we may be quite sure it is not too large for the distant features: for it is one of Nature's most beautiful adaptations, that she is never out of proportion with herself; that is, the minor details of scenery of the first class bear exactly the proportion to the same species of detail in scenery of the second class, that the large features of the first bear to the large features of the second. Every mineralogist knows that the quartz of the St. Gothard is as much larger in its crystal than the quartz of Snowdon, as the peak of the one mountain overtops the peak of the other; and that the crystals of the Andes are larger than either.* Every artist knows that the bowlders of an Alpine foreground, and the leaps of an Alpine stream, are as much larger than the bowlders, and as much bolder than the leaps, of a Cumberland foreground and torrent, as the Jungfrau is higher than Skiddaw. Therefore, if we take care of the near effect in any country, we need never be afraid of the distant.

225. For these reasons, the cottage villa, rather than the mansion, is to be preferred among our hills: it has been preferred in many instances, and in too many, with an unfortunate result; for the cottage villa is precisely that which affords the greatest scope for practical absurdity. Symmetry, proportion, and some degree of simplicity, are usually kept in view in the large building; but, in the smaller, the

* This is rather a bold assertion; and we should be sorry to maintain the fact as universal; but the crystals of *almost* all the rarer minerals are larger in the larger mountain; and that altogether independently of the period of elevation, which, in the case of Mont Blanc, is later than that of our own Mendips.

architect considers himself licensed to try all sorts of experiments, and jumbles together pieces of imitation, taken at random from his note-book, as carelessly as a bad chemist mixing elements, from which he may by accident obtain something new, though the chances are ten to one that he obtains something useless. The chemist, however, is more innocent than the architect; for the one throws his trash out of the window, if the compound fail; while the other always thinks his conceit too good to be lost. The great one cause of all the errors in this branch of architecture is, the principle of imitation, at once the most baneful and the most unintellectual, yet perhaps the most natural, that the human mind can encourage or act upon.* Let it once be thoroughly

* In § 166 we noticed the kind of error most common in amateur designs, and we traced that error to its great first cause, the assumption of the humor, instead of the true character, for a guide; but we did not sufficiently specify the mode in which that first cause operated, by prompting to imitation. By imitation we do not mean accurate copying, neither do we mean working under the influence of the feelings by which we may suppose the originators of a given model to have been actuated; but we mean the intermediate step of endeavoring to combine old materials in a novel manner. True copying may be disclaimed by architects, but it should not be disclaimed by nations; for when the feelings of the time in which certain styles had their origin have passed away, any examples of the same style will invariably be failures, unless they be copies. It is utter absurdity to talk of building Greek edifices now; no man ever will, or ever can, who does not believe in the Greek mythology; and, precisely by so much as he diverges from the technicality of strict copyism, he will err. But we ought to have pieces of Greek architecture, as we have reprints of the most valuable records, and it is better to build a new Parthenon than to set up the old one. Let the dust and the desolation of the Acropolis be undisturbed forever; let them be left to be the school of our moral feelings, not of our mechanical perceptions; the line and rule of the prying carpenter should not come into the quiet and holy places of the earth. Elsewhere, we may build marble models for the education of the national mind and eye; but it is useless to think of adapting the architecture of the Greek to the purposes of the Frank; it never has been done, and never will be. We delight, indeed, in observing the rise of such a building as La Madeleine: beautiful, because accurately copied; useful, as teaching the eye of every passer-by. But we must not think of its purpose; it is wholly unadapted for Christian worship; and were it as bad Greek as our National Gallery, it would be equally unfit.

rooted out, and the cottage villa will become a beautiful and interesting element of our landscape.

226. So much for size. The question of position need not detain us long, as the principles advanced in § 104 are true generally, with one exception. Beautiful and calm the situation must always be, but—in England—not conspicuous. In Italy, the dwelling of the descendants of those whose former life has bestowed on every scene the greater part of the majesty which it possesses, ought to have a dignity inherent in it, which would be shamed by shrinking back from the sight

The mistake of our architects in general is, that they fancy they are speaking good English by speaking bad Greek. We wish, therefore, that copying were more in vogue than it is. But imitation, the endeavor to be Gothic, or Tyrolese, or Venetian, without the slightest grain of Gothic or Venetian feeling; the futile effort to splash a building into age, or daub it into dignity, to zigzag it into sanctity, or slit it into ferocity, when its shell is neither ancient nor dignified, and its spirit neither priestly nor baronial,—this is the degrading vice of the age; fostered, as if man's reason were but a step between the brains of a kitten and a monkey, in the mixed love of despicable excitement and miserable mimicry.

If the English have no imagination, they should not scorn to be commonplace; or rather they should remember that poverty cannot be disguised by beggarly borrowing, that it may be ennobled by calm independence. Our national architecture never will improve until our population are generally convinced that in this art, as in all others, they cannot seem what they cannot be. The scarlet coat or the turned-down collar, which the obsequious portrait-painter puts on the shoulders and off the necks of his savage or insane customers, never can make the 'prentice look military, or the idiot poetical; and the architectural appurtenances of Norman embrasure or Veronaic balcony must be equally ineffective, until they can turn shopkeepers into barons, and schoolgirls into Juliets. Let the national mind be elevated in its character, and it will naturally become pure in its conceptions; let it be simple in its desires, and it will be beautiful in its ideas; let it be modest in feeling, and it will not be insolent in stone. For architect and for employer, there can be but one rule; to be natural in all that they do. and to look for the beauty of the material creation as they would for that of the human form, not in the chanceful and changing disposition of artificial decoration, but in the manifestation of the pure and animating spirit which keeps it from the coldness of the grave. [With this remarkable foreshadowing of Mr. Ruskin's Art-teaching compare *Seven Lamps* and *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, throughout.]

of men, and majesty enough to prevent such non-retirement from becoming intrusive; but the spirit of the English landscape is simple, and pastoral and mild, devoid, also, of high associations (for in the Highlands and Wales almost every spot which has the pride of memory is unfit for villa residence); and, therefore, all conspicuous appearance of its more wealthy inhabitants becomes ostentation, not dignity; impudence, not condescension. Their dwellings ought to be just evident, and no more, as forming part of the gentle animation and present prosperity which is the beauty of cultivated ground. And this partial concealment may be effected without any sacrifice of the prospect which the proprietor will insist upon commanding from his windows, and with great accession to his permanent enjoyment.

227. For, first, the only prospect which is really desirable or delightful, is that from the window of the breakfast-room. This is rather a bold position, but it will appear evident on a little consideration. It is pleasant enough to have a pretty little bit visible from the bedrooms; but, after all, it only makes gentlemen cut themselves in shaving, and ladies never think of anything beneath the sun when they are dressing. Then, in the dining-room, windows are absolutely useless, because dinner is always uncomfortable by daylight, and the weight of furniture effect which adapts the room for the gastronomic rites, renders it detestable as a sitting-room. In the library, people should have something else to do, than looking out of the windows; in the drawing-room, the uncomfortable stillness of the quarter of an hour before dinner, may, indeed, be alleviated by having something to converse about at the windows: but it is very shameful to spoil a prospect of any kind, by looking at it when we are not ourselves in a state of corporal comfort and mental good-humor, which nobody can be after the labor of the day, and before he has been fed. But the breakfast-room, where we meet the first light of the dewy day, the first breath of the morning air, the first glance of gentle eyes; to which we descend in the very spring and elasticity of mental renovation and bodily

energy, in the gathering up of our spirit for the new day, in the flush of our awakening from the darkness and the mystery of faint and inactive dreaming, in the resurrection from our daily grave, in the first tremulous sensation of the beauty of our being, in the most glorious perception of the lightning of our life; there, indeed, our expatiation of spirit, when it meets the pulse of outward sound and joy, the voice of bird and breeze and billow, *does* demand some power of liberty, some space for its going forth into the morning, some freedom of intercourse with the lovely and limitless energy of creature and creation.

228. The breakfast-room must have a prospect, and an extensive one; the hot roll and hyson are indiscussable except under such sweet circumstances. But he must be an awkward architect who cannot afford an opening to one window without throwing the whole mass of the building open to public view; particularly as, in the second place, the essence of a good window view is the breaking out of the distant features in little well-composed *morceaux*, not the general glare of a mass of one tone. Have we a line of lake? the silver water must glance out here and there among the trunks of near trees, just enough to show where it flows; then break into an open swell of water, just where it is widest, or where the shore is prettiest. Have we mountains? their peaks must appear over foliage or through it, the highest and boldest catching the eye conspicuously, yet not seen from base to summit, as if we wanted to measure them. Such a prospect as this is always compatible with as much concealment as we choose. In all these pieces of management, the architect's chief enemy is the vanity of his employer, who will always want to see more than he ought to see, and than he will have pleasure in seeing, without reflecting how the spectators pay for his peeping.

229. So much, then, for position. We have now only to settle the questions of form and color, and we shall then have closed the most tiresome investigation which we shall be called upon to enter into; inasmuch as the principles which we may arrive at in considering the architecture of defense,* though

[* Referring again to the intended sequel.]

we hope they may be useful in the abstract, will demand no application to native landscape, in which, happily, no defense is now required; and those relating to sacred edifices will, we also hope, be susceptible of more interest than can possibly be excited by the most degraded branch of the whole art of architecture, one hardly worthy of being included under the name—that, namely, with which we have lately been occupied, whose ostensible object is the mere provision of shelter and comfort for the despicable shell within whose darkness and corruption that purity of perception to which all high art is addressed is, during its immaturity, confined.

230. There are two modes in which any mental or material effect may be increased—by contrast, or by assimilation. Supposing that we have a certain number of features or existences under a given influence; then, by subjecting another feature to the same influence, we increase the universality, and therefore the effect, of that influence; but by introducing another feature, *not* under the same influence, we render the subjection of the other features more palpable, and therefore more effective. For example, let the influence be one of shade, to which a certain number of objects are subjected. We add another feature, subjected to the same influence, and we increase the *general impression* of shade; we add the same feature, *not* subjected to this influence, and we have deepened the *effect* of shade.

Now, the principles by which we are to be guided in the selection of one or other of these means are of great importance, and must be developed before we can conclude the investigation of villa architecture.

231. The impression produced by a given effect or influence depends upon its degree and its duration. Degree always means the proportionate energy exerted. Duration is either into time, or into space, or into both. The duration of color is in space alone, forming what is commonly called extent. The duration of sound is in space and time; the space being in the size of the waves of air, which give depth to the tone. The duration of mental emotion is in time

alone. Now in all influences, as is the degree, so is the impression; as is the duration, so is the effect of the impression; that is, its permanent operation upon the feelings, or the violence with which it takes possession of our own faculties and senses, as opposed to the abstract impression of its existence, without such operation on our own essence.

For example, the natural tendency of darkness or shade is to induce fear or melancholy. Now, as the degree of the shade, so is the abstract impression of the existence of shade; but as the duration of shade, so is the fear or melancholy excited by it.

Consequently, when we wish to increase the abstract impression of the power of any influence over objects with which we have no connection, we must increase degree; but, when we wish the impression to produce a permanent effect upon ourselves, we must increase duration.

Now, degree is always increased by contrast, and duration by assimilation. A few instances of this will be sufficient.

232. Blue is called a cold color, because it induces a feeling of coolness to the eye, and is much used by nature in her cold effects.

Supposing that we have painted a storm scene, in desolate country, with a single miserable cottage somewhere in front; that we have made the atmosphere and the distance cold and blue, and wish to heighten the comfortless impression.

There is an old rag hanging out of the window: shall it be red or blue? If it be red, the piece of warm color will contrast strongly with the atmosphere; will render its blueness and chilliness immensely more apparent; will increase the *degree* of both, and, therefore, the abstract impression of the existence of cold. But, if it be blue, it will bring the iciness of the distance up into the foreground; will fill the whole visible space with comfortless cold; will take away every relief from the desolation; will increase the *duration* of the influence, and, consequently, will extend its operation into the mind and feelings of the spectator, who will shiver as he looks.

Now, if we are making a *picture*, we shall not hesitate a moment: in goes the red; for the artist, while he wishes to render the actual impression of the presence of cold in the landscape as strong as possible, does not wish that chilliness to pass over into, or affect, the spectator, but endeavors to make the combination of color as delightful to his eye and feelings as possible.* But, if we are painting a *scene* for theatrical representation, where deception is aimed at, we shall be as decided in our proceeding on the opposite principle: in goes the blue; for we wish the idea of cold to pass over into the spectator, and make him so uncomfortable as to permit his fancy to place him distinctly in the place we desire, in the actual scene.

233. Again, Shakspeare has been blamed by some few critical asses for the raillery of Mercutio, and the humor of the nurse, in "Romeo and Juliet;" for the fool in "Lear;" for the porter in "Macbeth;" the grave-diggers in "Hamlet," etc.; because, it is said, these bits interrupt the tragic feeling. No such thing; they enhance it to an incalculable extent; they deepen its *degree*, though they diminish its duration. And what is the result? that the impression of the agony of the individuals brought before us is far stronger than it could otherwise have been, and our sympathies are more forcibly awakened; while, had the contrast been wanting, the impression of pain would have come over into ourselves, our selfish feeling, instead of our sympathy, would have been awakened; the conception of the grief of others diminished; and the tragedy would have made us very uncomfortable, but never have melted us to tears or excited us to indignation. When he, whose merry and satirical laugh rung in our ears the moment before, faints before us, with "a plague o' both your houses, they have made worms' meat of me," the acuteness of our feeling is excessive: but, had we not heard the laugh before, there would have been a dull

* This difference of principle is one leading distinction between the artist, properly so called, and the scene, diorama, or panorama painter.

weight of melancholy impression, which would have been painful, not affecting.

234. Hence, we see the grand importance of the choice of our means of enhancing effect, and we derive the simple rule for that choice, namely, that, when we wish to increase abstract impression, or to call upon the sympathy of the spectator, we are to use contrast; but, when we wish to extend the operation of the impression, or to awaken the selfish feelings, we are to use assimilation.

This rule, however, becomes complicated, where the feature of contrast is not altogether passive; that is, where we wish to give a conception of any qualities inherent in that feature, as well as in what it relieves; and, besides, it is not always easy to know whether it will be best to increase the abstract idea, or its operation. In most cases, energy, the degree of influence, is beauty; and, in many, the duration of influence is monotony. In others, duration is sublimity, and energy painful: in a few, energy and duration are attainable and delightful together.

235. It is impossible to give rules for judgment in every case; but the following points must always be observed:—First, when we use contrast, it must be natural and likely to occur. Thus the contrast in tragedy is the natural consequence of the character of human existence; it is what we see and feel every day of our lives. When a contrast is unnatural, it destroys the effect it should enhance.

Canning called on a French refugee in 1794. The conversation naturally turned on the execution of the Queen, then a recent event. Overcome by his feelings, the Parisian threw himself upon the ground, exclaiming, in an agony of tears, “*La bonne reine! la pauvre reine!*” Presently he sprang up, exclaiming, “*Cependant, Monsieur, il faut vous faire voir mon petit chien danser.*” This contrast, though natural in a Parisian, was unnatural in the nature of things, and therefore injurious.

236. Secondly, when the general influence, instead of being external, is an attribute or energy of the thing itself,

so as to bestow on it a permanent character, the contrast which is obtained by the absence of that character is injurious, and becomes what is called an interruption of the unity. Thus, the raw and colorless tone of the Swiss cottage, noticed in § 42, is an injurious contrast to the richness of the landscape, which is an inherent and necessary energy in surrounding objects. So, the character of Italian landscape is curvilinear; therefore, the outline of the buildings entering into its composition must be arranged on curvilinear principles, as investigated in § 144.

237. Thirdly. But, if the pervading character can be obtained in the single object by different means, the contrast will be delightful. Thus, the elevation of character which the hill districts of Italy possess by the magnificence of their forms, is transmitted to the villa by its dignity of detail and simplicity of outline; and the rectangular interruption to the curve of picturesque blue country, partaking of the nature of that which it interrupts, is a contrast giving relief and interest, while any Elizabethan acute angles, on the contrary, would have been a contrast obtained by the absence of the pervading energy of the universal curvilinear character, and therefore improper.

238. Fourthly, when the general energy, instead of pervading simultaneously the multitude of objects, as with one spirit, is independently possessed and manifested by every individual object, the result is repetition, not unity; and contrast is not merely agreeable, but necessary. Thus, a number of objects, forming the line of beauty, is pervaded by one simple energy; but if that energy is separately manifested in each, the result is painful monotony. Parallel right lines, without grouping, are always liable to this objection; and, therefore, a distant view of a flat country is never beautiful unless its horizontals are lost in richness of vegetation, as in Lombardy, or broken with masses of forest, or with distant hills. If none of these interruptions take place, there is immediate monotony, and no introduction can be more delightful than such a tower in the distance as Strasburg, or, indeed,

than any architectural combination of verticals. Peterborough is a beautiful instance of such an adaptation. It is always, then, to be remembered that repetition is not assimilation.

239. Fifthly, when any attribute is necessarily beautiful, that is, beautiful in every place and circumstance, we need hardly say that the contrast consisting in its absence is painful. It is only when beauty is local or accidental that opposition may be employed.

Sixthly. The *edge* of all contrasts, so to speak, should be as soft as is consistent with decisive effect. We mean, that a gradual change is better than instantaneous transfiguration; for, though always less effective, it is more agreeable. But this must be left very much to the judgment.

Seventhly. We must be very careful in ascertaining whether any given contrast is obtained by freedom from external, or absence of internal, energy, for it is often a difficult point to decide. Thus, the peace of the Alpine valley might, at first, seem to be a contrast caused by the want of the character of strength and sublimity manifested in the hills; but it is really caused by the freedom from the general and external influence of violence and desolation.

240. These, then, are principles applicable to all arts, without a single exception, and of particular importance in painting and architecture.* It will sometimes be found that one rule comes in the way of another; in which case, the most important is, of course, to be obeyed; but, in general, they will afford us an easy means of arriving at certain results, when, before, our conjectures must have been vague and unsatisfactory.

We may now proceed to determine the most proper *form* for the mountain villa of England.

241. We must first observe the prevailing lines of the near hills: if they are vertical, there will most assuredly be monotony, for the vertical lines of crag are never grouped, and accordingly, by our fourth rule, the prevailing lines of our

[* For further discussion of which, see *Elements of Drawing*, Letter III.]

edifice must be horizontal. On the Lake of Thun the tendency of the hills is vertical; this tendency is repeated by the buildings,* and the composition becomes thoroughly bad; but on the Lake of Como we have the same vertical tendency in the hills, while the grand lines of the buildings are horizontal, and the composition is good. But, if the prevailing lines of the near hills be curved (and they will be either curved or vertical), we must not interrupt their character, for the energy is then pervading, not individual; and, therefore, our edifice must be rectangular.

In both cases, therefore, the grand outline of the villa is the same; but in one we have it set off by contrast, in the other by assimilation; and we must work out in the architecture of each edifice the principle on which we have begun. Commencing with that in which we are to work by contrast: the vertical crags must be the result of violence, and the influence of destruction, of distortion, of torture, to speak strongly, must be evident in their every line. We free the building from this influence, and give it repose, gracefulness, and ease; and we have a contrast of feeling as well as of line, by which the desirable attributes are rendered evident in both objects, while the *duration* of neither energy being allowed, there can be no disagreeable effect upon the spectator, who will not shrink from the terror of the crags, nor feel a want of excitement in the gentleness of the building.

242. Secondly, Solitude is powerful and evident in its effect on the distant hills; therefore the effect of the villa should be joyous and life-like (not flippant, however, but serene); and, by rendering it so, we shall enhance the sublimity of the distance, as we showed in speaking of the Westmoreland cottage; and, therefore, we may introduce a number of windows with good effect, provided that they are kept in horizontal lines, and do not disturb the repose which we have shown to be necessary.

These three points of contrast will be quite enough: there

[* In their turrets and pinnacles, as shown by a poor wood-cut in the magazine, not worth reproduction.]

is no other external influence from which we can free the building, and the pervading energy must be communicated to it, or it will not harmonize with our feelings; therefore, before proceeding, we had better determine how this contrast is to be carried out in detail.

243. Our lines are to be horizontal; then the roof must be as flat as possible. We need not think of snow, because, however much we may slope the roof, it will not slip off from the material, which, here, is the only proper one; and the roof of the cottage is always very flat, which it would not be if there were any inconvenience attending such a form. But, for the sake of the second contrast, we are to have gracefulness and ease, as well as horizontality. Then we must break the line of the roof into different elevations, yet not making the difference great, or we shall have visible verticals. And this must not be done at random.

244. Take a flat line of beauty, $a d$, fig. 14, for the length

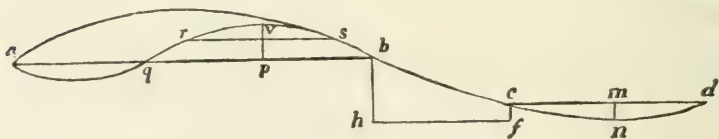


Fig. 14. Leading lines of Villa-composition.

of the edifice. Strike $a b$ horizontally from a , $c d$ from d : let fall the verticals, make $c f$ equal $m n$, the maximum; and draw $h f$. The curve should be so far continued as that $h f$ shall be to $c d$ as $c d$ to $a b$. Then we are sure of a beautifully proportioned form. Much variety may be introduced by using different curves; joining parabolas with cycloids, etc.; but the use of curves is always the best mode of obtaining good forms.*

Further ease may be obtained by added combinations. For instance, strike another curve ($a q b$) through the flat

[* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. IV. chap. xvii. § 49, and *Elements of Drawing*, Letter III.]

line $a b$; bisect the maximum $v p$, draw the horizontal $r s$, (observing to make the largest maximum of this curve towards the smallest maximum of the great curve, to restore the balance), join $r q$, $s b$, and we have another modification of the same beautiful form. This may be done in either side of the building, but not in both.

245. Then, if the flat roof be still found monotonous, it may be interrupted by garret windows, which must not be gabled, but turned with the curve $a b$, whatever that may be. This will give instant humility to the building, and take away any vestiges of Italian character which might hang about it, and which would be wholly out of place.

The windows may have tolerably broad architraves, but no cornices; an ornament both haughty and classical in its effect, and, on both accounts, improper here. They should be in level lines, but grouped at unequal distances, or they will have a formal and artificial air, unsuited to the irregularity and freedom around them. Some few of them may be arched, however, with the curve $a b$, the mingling of the curve and the square being very graceful. There should not be more than two tiers and the garrets, or the building will be too high.

So much for the general outline of the villa, in which we are to work by contrast. Let us pass over to that in which we are to work by assimilation, before speaking of the material and color which should be common to both.

246. The grand outline must be designed on exactly the same principles; for the curvilinear proportions, which were opposition before, will now be assimilation. Of course, we do not mean to say that every villa in a hill country should have the form $a b c d$; we should be tired to death if they had: but we bring forward that form as an example of the agreeable result of the principles on which we should always work, but whose result should be the same in no two cases. A modification of that form, however, will frequently be found useful; for, under the depression $h f$, we may have a hall of entrance and of exercise, which is a requisite of

extreme importance in hill districts, where it rains three hours out of four all the year round; and under *c d* we may have the kitchen, servants' rooms, and coachhouse, leaving the large division quiet and comfortable.

247. Then, as in the curved country there is no such distortion as that before noticed, no such evidence of violent agency, we need not be so careful about the appearance of perfect peace; we may be a little more dignified and a little more classical. The windows may be symmetrically arranged; and, if there be a blue and undulating distance, the upper tier may even have cornices; narrower architraves are to be used; the garrets may be taken from the roof, and their inmates may be accommodated in the other side of the house; but we must take care, in doing this, not to become Greek. The material, as we shall see presently, will assist us in keeping unclassical; and not a vestige of column or capital must appear in any part of the edifice. All should be pure, but all should be English; and there should be here, as elsewhere, much of the utilitarian about the whole, suited to the cultivated country in which it is placed.

248. It will never do to be speculative or imaginative in our details, on the supposition that the tendency of fine scenery is to make everybody imaginative and enthusiastic. Enthusiasm has no business with Turkey carpets or easy-chairs; and the very preparation of comfort for the body, which the existence of the villa supposes, is inconsistent with the supposition of any excitement of mind: and this is another reason for keeping the domestic building in richly productive country. Nature has set aside her sublime bits for us to feel and think in; she has pointed out her productive bits for us to sleep and eat in; and, if we sleep and eat amongst the sublimity, we are brutal; if we poetize amongst the cultivation, we are absurd. There are the time and place for each state of existence, and we should not jumble that which Nature has separated. She has addressed herself, in one part, wholly to the mind; there is nothing for us to eat but bilberries, nothing to rest upon but rock, and we have no

business to concoct picnics, and bring cheese, and ale, and sandwiches, in baskets, to gratify our beastly natures, where Nature never intended us to eat (if she had, we needn't have brought the baskets). In the other part, she has provided for our necessities; and we are very absurd, if we make ourselves fantastic, instead of comfortable. Therefore, all that we ought to do in the hill villa is, to adapt it for the habitation of a man of the highest faculties of perception and feeling; but only for the habitation of his hours of common sense, not of enthusiasm; it must be his dwelling as a man, not as a spirit; as a thing liable to decay, not as an eternal energy; as a perishable, not as an immortal.

249. Keeping, then, in view these distinctions of form between the two villas, the remaining considerations relate equally to both. We have several times alluded to the extreme richness and variety of hill foreground, as an internal energy to which there must be no contrast. Rawness of color is to be especially avoided, but so, also, is poverty of effect. It will, therefore, add much to the beauty of the building, if in any conspicuous and harsh angle, or shadowy molding, we introduce a wreath of carved leafwork,—in stone, of course. This sounds startling and expensive; but we are not thinking of expense: what ought to be, not what can be afforded, is the question. Besides, when all expense in shamming castles, building pinnacles, and all other fantasticisms has been shown to be injurious, that which otherwise would have been wasted in plaster battlements, to do harm, may surely be devoted to stone leafage, to do good. Now, if there be too much, or too conspicuous, ornament, it will destroy simplicity and humility, and everything which we have been endeavoring to get; therefore, the architect must be careful, and had better have immediate recourse to that natural beauty with which he is now endeavoring to assimilate.

250. When Nature determines on decorating a piece of projecting rock, she begins with the bold projecting surface, to which the eye is naturally drawn by its form, and (observe

how closely she works by the principles which were before investigated) she finishes this with lichens and mingled colors, to a degree of delicacy, which makes us feel that we never can look close enough; but she puts in not a single mass of form to attract the eye, more than the grand outline renders necessary. But, where the rock joins the ground, where the shadow falls, and the eye is not attracted, she puts in bold forms of ornament, large leaves and grass, bunches of moss and heather, strong in their projection, and deep in their color. Therefore, the architect must act on precisely the same principle: his outward surfaces he may leave the wind and weather to finish in their own way; but he cannot allow Nature to put grass and weeds into the shadows; *ergo*, he must do it himself; and, whenever the eye loses itself in shade, wherever there is a dark and sharp corner, there, if he can, he should introduce a wreath of flower-work. The carving will be preserved from the weather by this very propriety of situation: it would have moldered away, had it been exposed to the full drift of the rain, but will remain safe in the crevices where it is required; and, also, it will not injure the general effect, but will lie concealed until we approach, and then rise up, as it were, out of the darkness, to its duty; bestowing on the dwellings that finish of effect which is manifested around them, and gratifying the natural requirements of the mind for the same richness in the execution of the designs of men, which it has found on a near approach lavished so abundantly, in a distant view subdued so beautifully into the large effect of the designs of Nature.

251. Of the ornament itself, it is to be observed that it is not to be what is properly called architectural *decoration* (that which is “decorous,” becoming, or suitable to), namely, the combination of minor forms, which repeat the lines, and partake of the essence of the grand design, and carry out its meaning and life into its every member; but it is to be true sculpture; the presenting of a pure ideality of form to the eye, which may give perfect conception, without the assistance of color: it is to be the stone image of vegetation, not botani-

cally accurate, indeed, but sufficiently near to permit us to be sure of the intended flower or leaf. Not a single line of any other kind of ornament should be admitted, and there should be more leafage than flower-work, as it is the more easy in its flow and outline. Deep relief need not be attempted, but the edges of the leafage should be clearly and delicately defined. The cabbage, the vine, and the ivy are the best and most beautiful leaves: oak is a little too stiff, otherwise good. Particular attention ought to be paid to the ease of the stems and tendrils; such care will always be repaid. And it is to be especially observed, that the carving is not to be arranged in garlands or knots, or any other formalities, as in Gothic work; but the stalks are to rise out of the stone, as if they were rooted in it, and to fling themselves down where they are wanted, disappearing again in light sprays, as if they were still growing.

252. All this will require care in designing; but, as we have said before, we can always do without decoration; but, if we have it, it *must* be well done. It is not of the slightest use to economize; every farthing improperly saved does a shilling's worth of damage; and that is getting a bargain the wrong way. When one branch or group balances another, they *must* be different in composition. The same group may be introduced several times in different parts, but not when there is correspondence, or the effect will be unnatural; and it can hardly be too often repeated, that the *ornament* must be kept out of the general effect, must be invisible to all but the near observer, and, even to him, must not become a necessary part of the design, but must be sparingly and cautiously applied, so as to appear to have been thrown in by chance here and there, as Nature would have thrown in a bunch of herbage, affording adornment without concealment, and relief without interruption.

253. So much for form. The question of color has already been discussed at some length, in speaking of the cottage; but it is to be noticed, that the villa, from the nature of its situation, gets the higher hills back into a distance

which is three or four times more blue than any piece of scenery entering into combination with the cottage; so that more warmth of color is allowable in the building, as well as greater cheerfulness of effect. It should not look like stone, as the cottage should, but should tell as a building on the mind as well as the eye. White, therefore, is frequently allowable in small quantities, particularly on the border of a large and softly shored lake, like Windermere and the foot of Loch Lomond; but cream-color, and putty-color, and the other varieties of plaster-color are inexcusable. If more warmth is required by the situation than the sun will give on white, the building should be darkened at once. A warm rich gray is always beautiful in any place and under any circumstance; and, in fact, unless the proprietor likes to be kept damp like a traveling codfish, by trees about his house and close to it (which, if it be white, he must have, to prevent glare), such a gray is the only color which will be beautiful, or even innocent. The difficulty is to obtain it; and this naturally leads to the question of material.

254. If the color is to be white, we can have no ornament, for the shadows would make it far too conspicuous, and we should get only tawdriness. The simple forms may be executed in anything that will stand wet; and the roof, in all cases, should be of the coarse slate of the country, as rudely put on as possible. They must be kept clear of moss and conspicuous vegetation, or there will be an improper appearance of decay; but the more lichenous the better, and the rougher the slate the sooner it is colored. If the color is to be gray, we may use the gray primitive limestone, which is not ragged on the edges, without preparing the blocks too smoothly; or the more compact and pale-colored slate, which is frequently done in Westmoreland; and execute the ornaments in any very coarse dark marble. Greenstone is an excellent rock, and has a fine surface, but it is unmanageable. The grayer granites may often be used with good effect, as well as the coarse porphyries, when the gray is to be particularly warm. An outward surface of a loose block may be

often turned to good account in turning an angle; as the colors which it has contracted by its natural exposure will remain on it without inducing damp. It is always to be remembered, that he who prefers neatness to beauty, and who would have sharp angles and clean surfaces, in preference to curved outlines and lichenous color, has no business to live among hills.

255. Such, then, are the principal points to be kept in view in the edifice itself. Of the mode of uniting it with the near features of foliage and ground, it would be utterly useless to speak: it is a question of infinite variety, and involving the whole theory of composition, so that it would take up volumes to develop principles sufficient to guide us to the result which the feeling of the practiced eye would arrive at in a moment. The inequalities of the ground, the character and color of those inequalities, the nature of the air, the exposure, and the consequent fall of the light, the quantity and form of near and distant foliage, all have their effect on the design, and should have their influence on the designer, inducing, as they do, a perfect change of circumstance in every locality. Only one general rule can be given, and that we repeat. The house must *not* be a noun substantive, it must not stand by itself, it must be part and parcel of a proportioned whole: it must not even be seen all at once; and he who sees one end should feel that, from the given data, he can arrive at no conclusion respecting the other, yet be impressed with a feeling of a universal energy, pervading with its beauty of unanimity all life and all inanimation, all forms of stillness or motion, all presence of silence or of sound.

256. Thus, then, we have reviewed the most interesting examples of existing villa architecture, and we have applied the principles derived from those examples to the landscape of our own country. Throughout, we have endeavored to direct attention to the spirit, rather than to the letter, of all law, and to exhibit the beauty of that principle which is embodied in the line with which we have headed this concluding paper; of being satisfied with national and natural forms,

and not endeavoring to introduce the imaginations, or imitate the customs, of foreign nations, or of former times. All imitation has its origin in vanity, and vanity is the bane of architecture. And, as we take leave of them, we would, once for all, remind our English sons of Sempronius “qui villas attollunt marmore novas,” *novas* in the full sense of the word,—and who are setting all English feeling and all natural principles at defiance, that it is only the *bourgeois gentilhomme* who will wear his dressing-gown upside down, “parceque toutes les personnes de qualité portent les fleurs en en-bas.”

OXFORD, *October*, 1838.

THE
SEVEN LAMPS
OF
ARCHITECTURE



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PREFACE.

THE memoranda which form the basis of the following Essay have been thrown together during the preparation of one of the sections of the third volume of "Modern Painters." * I once thought of giving them a more expanded form; but their utility, such as it may be, would probably be diminished by farther delay in their publication, more than it would be increased by greater care in their arrangement. Obtained in every case by personal observation, there may be among them some details valuable even to the experienced architect; but with respect to the opinions founded upon them I must be prepared to bear the charge of impertinence which can hardly but attach to the writer who assumes a dogmatical tone in speaking of an art he has never practised. There are, however, cases in which men feel too keenly to be silent, and perhaps too strongly to be wrong; I have been forced into this impertinence; and have suffered too much from the destruction or neglect of the architecture I best loved, and from the erection of that which I cannot love, to reason cautiously respecting the modesty of my opposition to the principles which

* The inordinate delay in the appearance of that supplementary volume has, indeed, been chiefly owing to the necessity under which the writer felt himself, of obtaining as many memoranda as possible of mediæval buildings in Italy and Normandy, now in process of destruction, before that destruction should be consummated by the Restorer or Revolutionist. His whole time has been lately occupied in taking drawings from one side of buildings, of which masons were knocking down the other; nor can he yet pledge himself to any time for the publication of the conclusion of "Modern Painters;" he can only promise that its delay shall not be owing to any indolence on his part.

have induced the scorn of the one, or directed the design of the other. And I have been the less careful to modify the confidence of my statements of principles, because in the midst of the opposition and uncertainty of our architectural systems, it seems to me that there is something grateful in any *positive* opinion, though in many points wrong, as even weeds are useful that grow on a bank of sand.

Every apology is, however, due to the reader, for the hasty and imperfect execution of the plates. Having much more serious work in hand, and desiring merely to render them illustrative of my meaning, I have sometimes very completely failed even of that humble aim; and the text, being generally written before the illustration was completed, sometimes naïvely describes as sublime or beautiful, features which the plate represents by a blot. I shall be grateful if the reader will in such cases refer the expressions of praise to the Architecture, and not to the illustration.

So far, however, as their coarseness and rudeness admit, the plates are valuable; being either copies of memoranda made upon the spot, or (Plates IX. and XI.) enlarged and adapted from Daguerreotypes, taken under my own superintendence. Unfortunately, the great distance from the ground of the window which is the subject of Plate IX. renders even the Daguerreotype indistinct; and I cannot answer for the accuracy of any of the mosaic details, more especially of those which surround the window, and which I rather imagine, in the original, to be sculptured in relief. The general proportions are, however, studiously preserved; the spirals of the shafts are counted, and the effect of the whole is as near that of the thing itself, as is necessary for the purposes of illustration for which the plate is given. For the accuracy of the rest I can answer, even to the cracks in the stones, and the number of them; and though the looseness of the drawing, and the picturesque character which is necessarily given by an endeavor to draw old buildings as they actually appear, may perhaps diminish their credit for architectural veracity, they will do so unjustly.

The system of lettering adopted in the few instances in which sections have been given, appears somewhat obscure in the references, but it is convenient upon the whole. The line which marks the direction of any section is noted, if the section be symmetrical, by a single letter; and the section itself by the same letter with a line over it, *a*.— \bar{a} . But if the section be unsymmetrical, its direction is noted by two letters, *a. a. a.* at its extremities; and the actual section by the same letters with lines over them, $\bar{a}. \bar{a}. \bar{a}_2$, at the corresponding extremities.

The reader will perhaps be surprised by the small number of buildings to which reference has been made. But it is to be remembered that the following chapters pretend only to be a statement of principles, illustrated each by one or two examples, not an essay on European architecture; and those examples I have generally taken either from the buildings which I love best, or from the schools of architecture which, it appeared to me, have been less carefully described than they deserved. I could as fully, though not with the accuracy and certainty derived from personal observation, have illustrated the principles subsequently advanced, from the architecture of Egypt, India, or Spain, as from that to which the reader will find his attention chiefly directed, the Italian Romanesque and Gothic. But my affections, as well as my experience, led me to that line of richly varied and magnificently intellectual schools, which reaches, like a high watershed of Christian architecture, from the Adriatic to the Northumbrian seas, bordered by the impure schools of Spain on the one hand, and of Germany on the other: and as culminating points and centres of this chain, I have considered, first, the cities of the Val d'Arno, as representing the Italian Romanesque and pure Italian Gothic; Venice and Verona as representing the Italian Gothic colored by Byzantine elements; and Rouen, with the associated Norman cities, Caen, Bayeux, and Coutances, as representing the entire range of Northern architecture from the Romanesque to Flamboyant.

I could have wished to have given more examples from our early English Gothic; but I have always found it impossible to work in the cold interiors of our cathedrals, while the daily

services, lamps, and fumigation of those upon the Continent, render them perfectly safe. In the course of last summer I undertook a pilgrimage to the English Shrines, and began with Salisbury, where the consequence of a few days' work was a state of weakened health, which I may be permitted to name among the causes of the slightness and imperfection of the present Essay.

THE SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE.

INTRODUCTORY.

SOME years ago, in conversation with an artist whose works, perhaps, alone, in the present day, unite perfection of drawing with resplendence of color, the writer made some inquiry respecting the general means by which this latter quality was most easily to be attained. The reply was as concise as it was comprehensive—"Know what you have to do, and do it"—comprehensive, not only as regarded the branch of art to which it temporarily applied, but as expressing the great principle of success in every direction of human effort; for I believe that failure is less frequently attributable to either insufficiency of means or impatience of labor, than to a confused understanding of the thing actually to be done; and therefore, while it is properly a subject of ridicule, and sometimes of blame, that men propose to themselves a perfection of any kind, which reason, temperately consulted, might have shown to be impossible with the means at their command, it is a more dangerous error to permit the consideration of means to interfere with our conception, or, as is not impossible, even hinder our acknowledgment of goodness and perfection in themselves. And this is the more cautiously to be remembered; because, while a man's sense and conscience, aided by Revelation, are always enough, if earnestly directed, to enable him to discover what is right, neither his sense, nor conscience, nor feeling, are

ever enough, because they are not intended, to determine for him what is possible. He knows neither his own strength nor that of his fellows, neither the exact dependence to be placed on his allies nor resistance to be expected from his opponents. These are questions respecting which passion may warp his conclusions, and ignorance must limit them; but it is his own fault if either interfere with the apprehension of duty, or the acknowledgment of right. And, as far as I have taken cognizance of the causes of the many failures to which the efforts of intelligent men are liable, more especially in matters political, they seem to me more largely to spring from this single error than from all others, that the inquiry into the doubtful, and in some sort inexplicable, relations of capability, chance, resistance, and inconvenience, invariably precedes, even if it do not altogether supersede, the determination of what is absolutely desirable and just. Nor is it any wonder that sometimes the too cold calculation of our powers should reconcile us too easily to our shortcomings, and even lead us into the fatal error of supposing that our conjectural utmost is in itself well, or, in other words, that the necessity of offences renders them in-offensive.

What is true of human polity seems to me not less so of the distinctively political art of Architecture. I have long felt convinced of the necessity, in order to its progress, of some determined effort to extricate from the confused mass of partial traditions and dogmata with which it has become encumbered during imperfect or restricted practice, those large principles of right which are applicable to every stage and style of it. Uniting the technical and imaginative elements as essentially as humanity does soul and body, it shows the same infirmly balanced liability to the prevalence of the lower part over the higher, to the interference of the constructive, with the purity and simplicity of the reflective, element. This tendency, like every other form of materialism, is increasing with the advance of the age; and the only laws which resist it, based upon partial precedents, and already regarded with disrespect as decrepit, if not with defiance as tyrannical, are evidently inappli-

cable to the new forms and functions of the art, which the necessities of the day demand. How many these necessities may become, cannot be conjectured; they rise, strange and impatient, out of every modern shadow of change. How far it may be possible to meet them without a sacrifice of the essential characters of architectural art, cannot be determined by specific calculation or observance. There is no law, no principle, based on past practice, which may not be overthrown in a moment, by the arising of a new condition, or the invention of a new material; and the most rational, if not the only, mode of averting the danger of an utter dissolution of all that is systematic and consistent in our practice, or of ancient authority in our judgment, is to cease for a little while, our endeavors to deal with the multiplying host of particular abuses, restraints, or requirements; and endeavor to determine, as the guides of every effort, some constant, general, and irrefragable laws of right—laws, which based upon man's nature, not upon his knowledge, may possess so far the unchangeableness of the one, as that neither the increase nor imperfection of the other may be able to assault or invalidate them.

There are, perhaps, no such laws peculiar to any one art. Their range necessarily includes the entire horizon of man's action. But they have modified forms and operations belonging to each of his pursuits, and the extent of their authority cannot surely be considered as a diminution of its weight. Those peculiar aspects of them which belong to the first of the arts, I have endeavored to trace in the following pages; and since, if truly stated, they must necessarily be, not only safeguards against every form of error, but sources of every measure of success, I do not think that I claim too much for them in calling them the Lamps of Architecture, nor that it is indolence, in endeavoring to ascertain the true nature and nobility of their fire, to refuse to enter into any curious or special questioning of the innumerable hindrances by which their light has been too often distorted or overpowered.

Had this farther examination been attempted, the work would have become certainly more invidious, and perhaps less

useful, as liable to errors which are avoided by the present simplicity of its plan. Simple though it be, its extent is too great to admit of any adequate accomplishment, unless by a devotion of time which the writer did not feel justified in withdrawing from branches of inquiry in which the prosecution of works already undertaken has engaged him. Both arrangements and nomenclature are those of convenience rather than of system; the one is arbitrary and the other illogical: nor is it pretended that all, or even the greater number of, the principles necessary to the well-being of the art, are included in the inquiry. Many, however, of considerable importance will be found to develop themselves incidentally from those more specially brought forward.

Graver apology is necessary for an apparently graver fault. It has been just said, that there is no branch of human work whose constant laws have not close analogy with those which govern every other mode of man's exertion. But, more than this, exactly as we reduce to greater simplicity and surety any one group of these practical laws, we shall find them passing the mere condition of connection or analogy, and becoming the actual expression of some ultimate nerve or fibre of the mighty laws which govern the moral world. However mean or inconsiderable the act, there is something in the well doing of it, which has fellowship with the noblest forms of manly virtue; and the truth, decision, and temperance, which we reverently regard as honorable conditions of the spiritual being, have a representative or derivative influence over the works of the hand, the movements of the frame, and the action of the intellect.

And as thus every action, down even to the drawing of a line or utterance of a syllable, is capable of a peculiar dignity in the manner of it, which we sometimes express by saying it is truly done (as a line or tone is true), so also it is capable of dignity still higher in the motive of it. For there is no action so slight, nor so mean, but it may be done to a great purpose, and ennobled therefore; nor is any purpose so great but that slight actions may help it, and may be so done as to help it

much, most especially that chief of all purposes, the pleasing of God. Hence George Herbert—

“ A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.”

Therefore, in the pressing or recommending of any act or manner of acting, we have choice of two separate lines of argument: one based on representation of the expediency or inherent value of the work, which is often small, and always disputable; the other based on proofs of its relations to the higher orders of human virtue, and of its acceptableness, so far as it goes, to Him who is the origin of virtue. The former is commonly the more persuasive method, the latter assuredly the more conclusive; only it is liable to give offence, as if there were irreverence in adducing considerations so weighty in treating subjects of small temporal importance. I believe, however, that no error is more thoughtless than this. We treat God with irreverence by banishing Him from our thoughts, not by referring to His will on slight occasions. His is not the finite authority or intelligence which cannot be troubled with small things. There is nothing so small but that we may honor God by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands; and what is true of the Deity is equally true of His Revelation. We use it most reverently when most habitually: our insolence is in ever acting without reference to it, our true honoring of it is in its universal application. I have been blamed for the familiar introduction of its sacred words. I am grieved to have given pain by so doing; but my excuse must be my wish that those words were made the ground of every argument and the test of every action. We have them not often enough on our lips, nor deeply enough in our memories, nor loyally enough in our lives. The snow, the vapor, and the stormy wind fulfil His word. Are our acts and thoughts lighter and wilder than these—that we should forget it?

I have therefore ventured, at the risk of giving to some passages the appearance of irreverence, to take the higher line of argument wherever it appeared clearly traceable: and this, I would ask the reader especially to observe, not merely because I think it the best mode of reaching ultimate truth, still less because I think the subject of more importance than many others; but because every subject should surely, at a period like the present, be taken up in this spirit, or not at all. The aspect of the years that approach us is as solemn as it is full of mystery; and the weight of evil against which we have to contend, is increasing like the letting out of water. It is no time for the idleness of metaphysics, or the entertainment of the arts. The blasphemies of the earth are sounding louder, and its miseries heaped heavier every day; and if, in the midst of the exertion which every good man is called upon to put forth for their repression or relief, it is lawful to ask for a thought, for a moment, for a lifting of the finger, in any direction but that of the immediate and overwhelming need, it is at least incumbent upon us to approach the questions in which we would engage him, in the spirit which has become the habit of his mind, and in the hope that neither his zeal nor his usefulness may be checked by the withdrawal of an hour which has shown him how even those things which seemed mechanical, indifferent, or contemptible, depend for their perfection upon the acknowledgment of the sacred principles of faith, truth, and obedience, for which it has become the occupation of his life to contend.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE.

I. ARCHITECTURE is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them contributes to his mental health, power and pleasure.

It is very necessary, in the outset of all inquiry, to distinguish carefully between Architecture and Building.

To build, literally to confirm, is by common understanding to put together and adjust the several pieces of any edifice or receptacle of a considerable size. Thus we have church building, house building, ship building, and coach building. That one edifice stands, another floats, and another is suspended on iron springs, makes no difference in the nature of the art, if so it may be called, of building or edification. The persons who profess that art, are severally builders, ecclesiastical, naval, or of whatever other name their work may justify; but building does not become architecture merely by the stability of what it erects; and it is no more architecture which raises a church, or which fits it to receive and contain with comfort a required number of persons occupied in certain religious offices, than it is architecture which makes a carriage commodious or a ship swift. I do not, of course, mean that the word is not often, or even may not be legitimately, applied in such a sense (as we speak of naval architecture); but in that sense architecture ceases to be one of the fine arts, and it is therefore better not to run the risk, by loose nomenclature, of the confusion which would arise, and has often arisen, from extending principles which belong altogether to building, into the sphere of architecture proper.

Let us, therefore, at once confine the name to that art

which, taking up and admitting, as conditions of its working, the necessities and common uses of the building, impresses on its form certain characters venerable or beautiful, but otherwise unnecessary. Thus, I suppose, no one would call the laws architectural which determine the height of a breastwork or the position of a bastion. But if to the stone facing of that bastion be added an unnecessary feature, as a cable moulding, *that* is Architecture. It would be similarly unreasonable to call battlements or machicolations architectural features, so long as they consist only of an advanced gallery supported on projecting masses, with open intervals beneath for offence. But if these projecting masses be carved beneath into rounded courses, which are useless, and if the headings of the intervals be arched and trefoiled, which is useless, *that* is Architecture. It may not be always easy to draw the line so sharply and simply, because there are few buildings which have not some pretence or color of being architectural; neither can there be any architecture which is not based on building, nor any good architecture which is not based on good building; but it is perfectly easy and very necessary to keep the ideas distinct, and to understand fully that Architecture concerns itself only with those characters of an edifice which are above and beyond its common use. I say common; because a building raised to the honor of God, or in memory of men, has surely a use to which its architectural adornment fits it; but not a use which limits, by any inevitable necessities, its plan or details.

II. Architecture proper, then, naturally arranges itself under five heads:—

Devotional; including all buildings raised for God's service or honor.

Memorial; including both monuments and tombs.

Civil; including every edifice raised by nations or societies, for purposes of common business or pleasure.

Military; including all private and public architecture of defence.

Domestic; including every rank and kind of dwelling-place.

Now, of the principles which I would endeavor to develop, while all must be, as I have said, applicable to every stage and style of the art, some, and especially those which are exciting rather than directing, have necessarily fuller reference to one kind of building than another; and among these I would place first that spirit which, having influence in all, has nevertheless such especial reference to devotional and memorial architecture—the spirit which offers for such work precious things simply because they are precious; not as being necessary to the building, but as an offering, surrendering, and sacrifice of what is to ourselves desirable. It seems to me, not only that this feeling is in most cases wholly wanting in those who forward the devotional buildings of the present day; but that it would even be regarded as an ignorant, dangerous, or perhaps criminal principle by many among us. I have not space to enter into dispute of all the various objections which may be urged against it—they are many and specious; but I may, perhaps, ask the reader's patience while I set down those simple reasons which cause me to believe it a good and just feeling, and as well-pleasing to God and honorable in men, as it is beyond all dispute necessary to the production of any great work in the kind with which we are at present concerned.

III. Now, first, to define this Lamp, or Spirit of Sacrifice, clearly. I have said that it prompts us to the offering of precious things merely because they are precious, not because they are useful or necessary. It is a spirit, for instance, which of two marbles, equally beautiful, applicable and durable, would choose the more costly because it was so, and of two kinds of decoration, equally effective, would choose the more elaborate because it was so, in order that it might in the same compass present more cost and more thought. It is therefore most unreasoning and enthusiastic, and perhaps best negatively defined, as the opposite of the prevalent feeling of modern times, which desires to produce the largest results at the least cost.

Of this feeling, then, there are two distinct forms: the first, the wish to exercise self-denial for the sake of self-discipline

merely, a wish acted upon in the abandonment of things loved or desired, there being no direct call or purpose to be answered by so doing; and the second, the desire to honor or please some one else by the costliness of the sacrifice. The practice is, in the first case, either private or public; but most frequently, and perhaps most properly, private; while, in the latter case, the act is commonly, and with greatest advantage, public. Now, it cannot but at first appear futile to assert the expediency of self-denial for its own sake, when, for so many sakes, it is every day necessary to a far greater degree than any of us practise it. But I believe it is just because we do not enough acknowledge or contemplate it as a good in itself, that we are apt to fail in its duties when they become imperative, and to calculate, with some partiality, whether the good proposed to others measures or warrants the amount of grievance to ourselves, instead of accepting with gladness the opportunity of sacrifice as a personal advantage. Be this as it may, it is not necessary to insist upon the matter here; since there are always higher and more useful channels of self-sacrifice, for those who chose to practise it, than any connected with the arts.

While in its second branch, that which is especially concerned with the arts, the justice of the feeling is still more doubtful: it depends on our answer to the broad question, Can the Deity be indeed honored by the presentation to Him of any material objects of value, or by any direction of zeal or wisdom which is not immediately beneficial to men?

For, observe, it is not now the question whether the fairness and majesty of a building may or may not answer any moral purpose; it is not the *result* of labor in any sort of which we are speaking, but the bare and mere costliness—the substance and labor and time themselves: are these, we ask, independently of their result, acceptable offerings to God, and considered by Him as doing Him honor? So long as we refer this question to the decision of feeling, or of conscience, or of reason merely, it will be contradictorily or imperfectly answered; it admits of entire answer only when we have met

another and a far different question, whether the Bible be indeed one book or two, and whether the character of God revealed in the Old Testament be other than His character revealed in the New.

IV. Now, it is a most secure truth, that, although the particular ordinances divinely appointed for special purposes at any given period of man's history, may be by the same divine authority abrogated at another, it is impossible that any character of God, appealed to or described in any ordinance past or present, can ever be changed, or understood as changed, by the abrogation of that ordinance. God is one and the same, and is pleased or displeased by the same things for ever, although one part of His pleasure may be expressed at one time rather than another, and although the mode in which His pleasure is to be consulted may be by Him graciously modified to the circumstances of men. Thus, for instance, it was necessary that, in order to the understanding by man of the scheme of Redemption, that scheme should be foreshown from the beginning by the type of bloody sacrifice. But God had no more pleasure in such sacrifice in the time of Moses than He has now; He never accepted as a propitiation for sin any sacrifice but the single one in prospective; and that we may not entertain any shadow of doubt on this subject, the worthlessness of all other sacrifice than this is proclaimed at the very time when typical sacrifice was most imperatively demanded. God was a spirit, and could be worshipped only in spirit and in truth, as singly and exclusively when every day brought its claim of typical and material service or offering, as now when He asks for none but that of the heart.

So, therefore, it is a most safe and sure principle that, if in the manner of performing any rite at any time, circumstances can be traced which we are either told, or may legitimately conclude, *pleased* God at that time, those same circumstances will please Him at all times, in the performance of all rites or offices to which they may be attached in like manner; unless it has been afterwards revealed that, for

some special purpose, it is now His will that such circumstances should be withdrawn. And this argument will have all the more force if it can be shown that such conditions were not essential to the completeness of the rite in its human uses and bearings, and only were added to it as being in *themselves* pleasing to God.

V. Now, was it necessary to the completeness, as a type, of the Levitical sacrifice, or to its utility as an explanation of divine purposes, that it should cost anything to the person in whose behalf it was offered? On the contrary, the sacrifice which it foreshowed was to be God's free gift; and the cost of, or difficulty of obtaining, the sacrificial type, could only render that type in a measure obscure, and less expressive of the offering which God would in the end provide for all men. Yet this costliness was *generally* a condition of the acceptableness of the sacrifice. "Neither will I offer unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." * That costliness, therefore, must be an acceptable condition in all human offerings at all times; for if it was pleasing to God once, it must please Him always, unless directly forbidden by Him afterwards, which it has never been.

Again, was it necessary to the typical perfection of the Levitical offering, that it should be the best of the flock? Doubtless the spotlessness of the sacrifice renders it more expressive to the Christian mind; but was it because so expressive that it was actually, and in so many words, demanded by God? Not at all. It was demanded by Him expressly on the same grounds on which an earthly governor would demand it, as a testimony of respect. "Offer it now unto thy governor." † And the less valuable offering was rejected, not because it did not image Christ, nor fulfil the purposes of sacrifice, but because it indicated a feeling that would grudge the best of its possessions to Him who gave them; and because it was a bold dishonoring of God in the sight of man. Whence it may be infallibly concluded, that in whatever offerings we may now

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. Deut. xvi. 16, 17.

† Mal. i. 8.

see reason to present unto God (I say not what these may be), a condition of their acceptableness will be now, as it was then, that they should be the best of their kind.

VI. But farther, was it necessary to the carrying out of the Mosaical system, that there should be either art or splendor in the form or services of the tabernacle or temple? Was it necessary to the perfection of any one of their typical offices, that there should be that hanging of blue, and purple, and scarlet? those taches of brass and sockets of silver? that working in cedar and overlaying with gold? One thing at least is evident: there was a deep and awful danger in it; a danger that the God whom they so worshipped, might be associated in the minds of the serfs of Egypt with the gods to whom they had seen similar gifts offered and similar honors paid. The probability, in our times, of fellowship with the feelings of the idolatrous Romanist is absolutely as nothing compared with the danger to the Israelite of a sympathy with the idolatrous Egyptian;† no speculative, no unproved danger; but proved fatally by their fall during a month's abandonment to their own will; a fall into the most servile idolatry; yet marked by such offerings to their idol as their leader was, in the close sequel, instructed to bid them offer to God. This danger was imminent, perpetual, and of the most awful kind: it was the one against which God made provision, not only by commandments, by threatenings, by promises, the most urgent, repeated, and impressive; but by temporary ordinances of a severity so terrible as almost to dim for a time, in the eyes of His people, His attribute of mercy. The principal object of every instituted law of that Theocracy, of every judgment sent forth in its vindication, was to mark to the people His hatred of idolatry; a hatred written under their advancing steps, in the blood of the Canaanite, and more sternly still in the darkness of their own desolation, when the children and the sucklings swooned in the streets of Jerusalem, and the lion tracked his prey in the dust of Samaria.* Yet against this

* Lam. ii. 11. 2 Kings xvii. 25.

mortal danger provision was not made in one way (to man's thoughts the simplest, the most natural, the most effective), by withdrawing from the worship of the Divine Being whatever could delight the sense, or shape the imagination, or limit the idea of Deity to place. This one way God refused, demanding for Himself such honors, and accepting for Himself such local dwelling, as had been paid and dedicated to idol gods by heathen worshippers; and for what reason? Was the glory of the tabernacle necessary to set forth or image His divine glory to the minds of His people? What! purple or scarlet necessary to the people who had seen the great river of Egypt run scarlet to the sea, under His condemnation? What! golden lamp and cherub necessary for those who had seen the fires of heaven falling like a mantle on Mount Sinai, and its golden courts opened to receive their mortal lawgiver? What! silver clasp and fillet necessary when they had seen the silver waves of the Red Sea clasp in their arched hollows the corpses of the horse and his rider? Nay—not so. There was but one reason, and that an eternal one; that as the covenant that He made with men was accompanied with some external sign of its continuance, and of His remembrance of it, so the acceptance of that covenant might be marked and signified by use, in some external sign of their love and obedience, and surrender of themselves and theirs to His will; and that their gratitude to Him, and continual remembrance of Him, might have at once their expression and their enduring testimony in the presentation to Him, not only of the firstlings of the herd and fold, not only of the fruits of the earth and the tithe of time, but of all treasures of wisdom and beauty; of the thought that invents, and the hand that labors; of wealth of wood, and weight of stone; of the strength of iron, and of the light of gold.

And let us not now lose sight of this broad and unabrogated principle—I might say, incapable of being abrogated, so long as men shall receive earthly gifts from God. Of all that they have His tithe must be rendered to Him, or in so far and in so much He is forgotten: of the skill and of the treasure, of the

strength and of the mind, of the time and of the toil, offering must be made reverently; and if there be any difference between the Levitical and the Christian offering, it is that the latter may be just so much the wider in its range as it is less typical in its meaning, as it is thankful instead of sacrificial. There can be no excuse accepted because the Deity does not now visibly dwell in His temple; if He is invisible it is only through our failing faith: nor any excuse because other calls are more immediate or more sacred; this ought to be done, and not the other left undone. Yet this objection, as frequent as feeble, must be more specifically answered.

VII. It has been said—it ought always to be said, for it is true—that a better and more honorable offering is made to our Master in ministry to the poor, in extending the knowledge of His name, in the practice of the virtues by which that name is hallowed, than in material presents to His temple. Assuredly it is so: woe to all who think that any other kind or manner of offering may in any wise take the place of these! Do the people need place to pray, and calls to hear His word? Then it is no time for smoothing pillars or carving pulpits; let us have enough first of walls and roofs. Do the people need teaching from house to house, and bread from day to day? Then they are deacons and ministers we want, not architects. I insist on this, I plead for this; but let us examine ourselves, and see if this be indeed the reason for our backwardness in the lesser work. The question is not between God's house and His poor: it is not between God's house and His Gospel. It is between God's house and ours. Have we no tessellated colors on our floors? no frescoed fancies on our roofs? no niched statuary in our corridors? no gilded furniture in our chambers? no costly stones in our cabinets? Has even the tithe of these been offered? They are, or they ought to be, the signs that enough has been devoted to the great purposes of human stewardship, and that there remains to us what we can spend in luxury; but there is a greater and prouder luxury than this selfish one—that of bringing a portion of such things as these into sacred

service, and presenting them for a memorial* that our pleasure as well as our toil has been hallowed by the remembrance of Him who gave both the strength and the reward. And until this has been done, I do not see how such possessions can be retained in happiness. I do not understand the feeling which would arch our own gates and pave our own thresholds, and leave the church with its narrow door and foot-worn sill; the feeling which enriches our own chambers with all manner of costliness, and endures the bare wall and mean compass of the temple. There is seldom even so severe a choice to be made, seldom so much self-denial to be exercised. There are isolated cases, in which men's happiness and mental activity depend upon a certain degree of luxury in their houses; but then this is true luxury, felt and tasted, and profited by. In the plurality of instances nothing of the kind is attempted, nor can be enjoyed; men's average resources cannot reach it; and that which they *can* reach, gives them no pleasure, and might be spared. It will be seen, in the course of the following chapters, that I am no advocate for meanness of private habitation. I would fain introduce into it all magnificence, care, and beauty, where they are possible; but I would not have that useless expense in unnoticed fineries or formalities; cornicings of ceilings and graining of doors, and fringing of curtains, and thousands such; things which have become foolishly and apathetically habitual—things on whose common appliance hang whole trades, to which there never yet belonged the blessing of giving one ray of real pleasure, or becoming of the remotest or most contemptible use—things which cause half the expense of life, and destroy more than half its comfort, manliness, respectability, freshness, and facility. I speak from experience: I know what it is to live in a cottage with a deal floor and roof, and a hearth of mica slate; and I know it to be in many respects healthier and happier than living between a Turkey carpet and gilded ceiling, beside a steel grate and polished fender. I do not say that such things have not their place and propriety;

* Num. xxxi. 54. Psa. lxxvi. 11.

but I say this, emphatically, that the tenth part of the expense which is sacrificed in domestic vanities, if not absolutely and meaninglessly lost in domestic discomforts and incumbrances, would, if collectively offered and wisely employed, build a marble church for every town in England; such a church as it should be a joy and a blessing even to pass near in our daily ways and walks, and as it would bring the light into the eyes to see from afar, lifting its fair height above the purple crowd of humble roofs.

VIII. I have said for every town: I do not want a marble church for every village; nay, I do not want marble churches at all for their own sake, but for the sake of the spirit that would build them. The church has no need of any visible splendors; her power is independent of them, her purity is in some degree opposed to them. The simplicity of a pastoral sanctuary is lovelier than the majesty of an urban temple; and it may be more than questioned whether, to the people, such majesty has ever been the source of any increase of effective piety; but to the builders it has been, and must ever be. It is not the church we want, but the sacrifice; not the emotion of admiration, but the act of adoration; not the gift, but the giving.² And see how much more charity the full understanding of this might admit, among classes of men of naturally opposite feelings; and how much more nobleness in the work. There is no need to offend by importunate, self-proclaiming splendor. Your gift may be given in an unassuming way. Cut one or two shafts out of a porphyry whose preciousness those only would know who would desire it to be so used; add another month's labor to the undercutting of a few capitals, whose delicacy will not be seen nor loved by one beholder of ten thousand; see that the simplest masonry of the edifice be perfect and substantial; and to those who regard such things, their witness will be clear and impressive; to those who regard them not, all will at least be inoffensive. But do not think the feeling itself a folly, or the act itself useless. Of what use was that dearly-bought water of the well of Bethlehem with which the King of Israel slaked the dust of

Adullum?—yet was not thus better than if he had drunk it? Of what use was that passionate act of Christian sacrifice, against which, first uttered by the false tongue, the very objection we would now conquer took a sullen tone for ever? * So also let us not ask of what use our offering is to the church: it is at least better for *us* than if it had been retained for ourselves. It may be better for others also: there is, at any rate, a chance of this; though we must always fearfully and widely shun the thought that the magnificence of the temple can materially add to the efficiency of the worship or to the power of the ministry. Whatever we do, or whatever we offer, let it not interfere with the simplicity of the one, or abate, as if replacing, the zeal of the other. That is the abuse and fallacy of Romanism, by which the true spirit of Christian offering is directly contradicted. The treatment of the Papists' temple is eminently exhibitory; it is surface work throughout; and the danger and evil of their church decoration lie, not in its reality—not in the true wealth and art of it, of which the lower people are never cognizant—but in its tinsel and glitter, in the gilding of the shrine and painting of the image, in embroidery of dingy robes and crowding of imitated gems; all this being frequently thrust forward to the concealment of what is really good or great in their buildings.³ Of an offering of gratitude which is neither to be exhibited nor rewarded, which is neither to win praise nor purchase salvation, the Romanist (as such) has no conception.

IX. While, however, I would especially deprecate the imputation of any other acceptableness or usefulness to the gift itself than that which it receives from the spirit of its presentation, it may be well to observe, that there is a lower advantage which never fails to accompany a dutiful observance of any right abstract principle. While the first fruits of his possessions were required from the Israelite as a testimony of fidelity, the payment of those first fruits was nevertheless rewarded, and that connectedly and specifically, by the increase of those

* John xii. 5.

possessions. Wealth, and length of days, and peace, were the promised and experienced rewards of his offering, though they were not to be the objects of it. The tithe paid into the storehouse was the expressed condition of the blessing which there should not be room enough to receive. And it will be thus always: God never forgets any work or labor of love; and whatever it may be of which the first and best proportions or powers have been presented to Him, he will multiply and increase sevenfold. Therefore, though it may not be necessarily the interest of religion to admit the service of the arts, the arts will never flourish until they have been primarily devoted to that service—devoted, both by architect and employer; by the one in scrupulous, earnest, affectionate design; by the other in expenditure at least more frank, at least less calculating, than that which he would admit in the indulgence of his own private feelings. Let this principle be but once fairly acknowledged among us; and however it may be chilled and repressed in practice, however feeble may be its real influence, however the sacredness of it may be diminished by counter-workings of vanity and self-interest, yet its mere acknowledgment would bring a reward; and with our present accumulation of means and of intellect, there would be such an impulse and vitality given to art as it has not felt since the thirteenth century. And I do not assert this as other than a national consequence: I should, indeed, expect a larger measure of every great and spiritual faculty to be always given where those faculties had been wisely and religiously employed; but the impulse to which I refer, would be, humanly speaking, certain; and would naturally result from obedience to the two great conditions enforced by the Spirit of Sacrifice, first, that we should in everything do our best; and, secondly, that we should consider increase of apparent labor as an increase of beauty in the building. A few practical deductions from these two conditions, and I have done.

X. For the first: it is alone enough to secure success, and it is for want of observing it that we continually fail. We are none of us so good architects as to be able to work habitu-

ally beneath our strength; and yet there is not a building that I know of, lately raised, wherein it is not sufficiently evident that neither architect nor builder has done his best. It is the especial characteristic of modern work. All old work nearly has been hard work. It may be the hard work of children, of barbarians, of rusties; but it is always their utmost. Ours has as constantly the look of money's worth, of a stopping short wherever and whenever we can, of a lazy compliance with low conditions; never of a fair putting forth of our strength. Let us have done with this kind of work at once: cast off every temptation to it: do not let us degrade ourselves voluntarily, and then mutter and mourn over our short comings; let us confess our poverty or our parsimony, but not belie our human intellect. It is not even a question of how *much* we are to do, but of how it is to be done; it is not a question of doing more, but of doing better. Do not let us boss our roofs with wretched, half-worked, blunt-edged rosettes; do not let us flank our gates with rigid imitations of mediæval statuary. Such things are mere insults to common sense, and only unfit us for feeling the nobility of their prototypes. We have so much, suppose, to be spent in decoration; let us go to the Flaxman of his time, whoever he may be, and bid him carve for us a single statue, frieze or capital, or as many as we can afford, compelling upon him the one condition, that they shall be the best he can do; place them where they will be of the most value, and be content. Our other capitals may be mere blocks, and our other niches empty. No matter: better our work unfinished than all bad. It may be that we do not desire ornament of so high an order: choose, then, a less developed style, also, if you will, rougher material; the law which we are enforcing requires only that what we pretend to do and to give, shall both be the best of their kind; choose, therefore, the Norman hatchet work, instead of the Flaxman frieze and statue, but let it be the best hatchet work; and if you cannot afford marble, use Caen stone, but from the best bed; and if not stone, brick, but the best brick; preferring always what is good of a lower order of work or material, to what is bad of a higher; for this

is not only the way to improve every kind of work, and to put every kind of material to better use; but it is more honest and unpretending, and is in harmony with other just, upright, and manly principles, whose range we shall have presently to take into consideration.

XI. The other condition which we had to notice, was the value of the appearance of labor upon architecture. I have spoken of this before;* and it is, indeed, one of the most frequent sources of pleasure which belong to the art, always, however, within certain somewhat remarkable limits. For it does not at first appear easily to be explained why labor, as represented by materials of value, should, without sense of wrong or error, bear being wasted; while the waste of actual workmanship is always painful, so soon as it is apparent. But so it is, that, while precious materials may, with a certain profusion and negligence, be employed for the magnificence of what is seldom seen, the work of man cannot be carelessly and idly bestowed, without an immediate sense of wrong; as if the strength of the living creature were never intended by its Maker to be sacrificed in vain, though it is well for us sometimes to part with what we esteem precious of substance, as showing that in such a service it becomes but dross and dust. And in the nice balance between the straitening of effort or enthusiasm on the one hand, and vainly casting it away upon the other, there are more questions than can be met by any but very just and watchful feeling. In general it is less the mere loss of labor that offends us, than the lack of judgment implied by such loss; so that if men confessedly work for work's sake, and it does not appear that they are ignorant where or how to make their labor tell, we shall not be grossly offended. On the contrary, we shall be pleased if the work be lost in carrying out a principle, or in avoiding a deception. It, indeed, is a law properly belonging to another part of our subject, but it may be allowably stated here, that, whenever, by the construction of a building, some parts of it are hidden

* Mod. Painters, Part I. Sec. 1, Chap. 3.

from the eye which are the continuation of others bearing some consistent ornament, it is not well that the ornament should cease in the parts concealed; credit is given for it, and it should not be deceptively withdrawn: as, for instance, in the sculpture of the backs of the statues of a temple pediment; never, perhaps, to be seen, but yet not lawfully to be left unfinished. And so in the working out of ornaments in dark concealed places, in which it is best to err on the side of completion; and in the carrying round of string courses, and other such continuous work; not but that they may stop sometimes, on the point of going into some palpably impenetrable recess, but then let them stop boldly and markedly, on some distinct terminal ornament, and never be supposed to exist where they do not. The arches of the towers which flank the transepts of Rouen Cathedral have rosette ornaments on their spandrels, on the three visible sides; none on the side towards the roof. The right of this is rather a nice point for question.

XII. Visibility, however, we must remember, depends, not only on situation, but on distance; and there is no way in which work is more painfully and unwisely lost than in its over delicacy on parts distant from the eye. Here, again, the principle of honesty must govern our treatment: we must not work any kind of ornament which is, perhaps, to cover the whole building (or at least to occur on all parts of it) delicately where it is near the eye, and rudely where it is removed from it. That is trickery and dishonesty. Consider, first, what kinds of ornaments will tell in the distance and what near, and so distribute them, keeping such as by their nature are delicate, down near the eye, and throwing the bold and rough kinds of work to the top; and if there be any kind which is to be both near and far off, take care that it be as boldly and rudely wrought where it is well seen as where it is distant, so that the spectator may know exactly what it is, and what it is worth. Thus chequered patterns, and in general such ornaments as common workmen can execute, may extend over the whole building; but bas-reliefs, and fine niches and capitals, should be kept down, and the common sense of this will always give a building

dignity, even though there be some abruptness or awkwardness, in the resulting arrangements. Thus at San Zeno at Verona, the bas-reliefs, full of incident and interest, are confined to a parallelogram of the front, reaching to the height of the capitals of the columns of the porch. Above these, we find a simple, though most lovely, little arcade; and above that, only blank wall, with square face shafts. The whole effect is tenfold grander and better than if the entire façade had been covered with bad work, and may serve for an example of the way to place little where we cannot afford much. So, again, the transept gates of Rouen * are covered with delicate bas-reliefs (of which I shall speak at greater length presently) up to about once and a half a man's height; and above that come the usual and more visible statues and niches. So in the campanile at Florence, the circuit of bas-reliefs is on its lowest story; above that come its statues; and above them all its pattern mosaic, and twisted columns, exquisitely finished, like all Italian work of the time, but still, in the eye of the Florentine, rough and commonplace by comparison with the bas-reliefs. So generally the most delicate niche work and best mouldings of the French Gothic are in gates and low windows well within sight; although, it being the very spirit of that style to trust to its exuberance for effect, there is occasionally a burst upwards and blossoming unrestrainably to the sky, as in the pediment of the west front of Rouen, and in the recess of the rose window behind it, where there are some most elaborate flower-mouldings, all but invisible from below, and only adding a general enrichment to the deep shadows that relieve the shafts of the advanced pediment. It is observable, however, that this very work is bad flamboyant, and has corrupt renaissance characters in its detail as well as use; while in the earlier and grander north and south gates, there is a very noble proportioning of the work to the distance, the niches and statues which crown the northern one, at a height of about

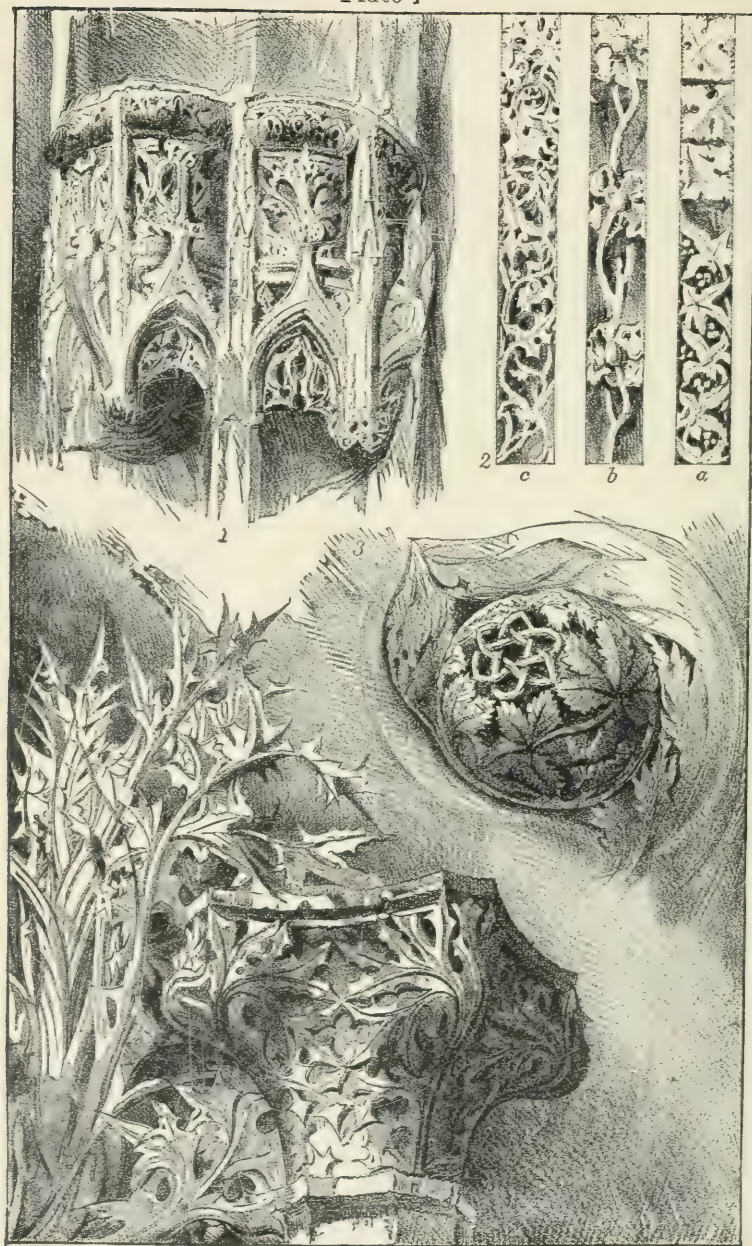
* Henceforward, for the sake of convenience, when I name any cathedral town in this manner, let me be understood to speak of its cathedral church.

one hundred feet from the ground, being alike colossal and simple; visibly so from below, so as to induce no deception, and yet honestly and well finished above, and all that they are expected to be; the features very beautiful, full of expression, and as delicately wrought as any work of the period.

XIII. It is to be remembered, however, that while the ornaments in every fine ancient building, without exception so far as I am aware, are most delicate at the base, they are often in greater effective *quantity* on the upper parts. In high towers this is perfectly natural and right, the solidity of the foundation being as necessary as the division and penetration of the superstructure; hence the lighter work and richly pierced crowns of late Gothic towers. The campanile of Giotto at Florence, already alluded to, is an exquisite instance of the union of the two principles, delicate bas-reliefs adorning its massy foundation, while the open tracery of the upper windows attracts the eye by its slender intricacy, and a rich cornice crowns the whole. In such truly fine cases of this disposition the upper work is effective by its quantity and intricacy only, as the lower portions by delicacy; so also in the Tour de Beurre at Rouen, where, however, the detail is massy throughout, subdividing into rich meshes as it ascends. In the bodies of buildings the principle is less safe, but its discussion is not connected with our present subject.

XIV. Finally, work may be wasted by being too good for its material, or too fine to bear exposure; and this, generally a characteristic of late, especially of renaissance, work, is perhaps the worst fault of all. I do not know anything more painful or pitiful than the kind of ivory carving with which the Certosa of Pavia, and part of the Colleone sepulchral chapel at Bergamo, and other such buildings, are incrustated, of which it is not possible so much as to think without exhaustion; and a heavy sense of the misery it would be, to be forced to look at it at all. And this is not from the quantity of it, nor because it is bad work—much of it is inventive and able; but because it looks as if it were only fit to be put in inlaid cabinets and velveted caskets, and as if it could not bear one drifting shower

Plate I



or gnawing frost. We are afraid for it, anxious about it, and tormented by it; and we feel that a massy shaft and a bold shadow would be worth it all. Nevertheless, even in cases like these, much depends on the accomplishment of the great ends of decoration. If the ornament does its duty—if it *is* ornament, and its points of shade and light tell in the general effect, we shall not be offended by finding that the sculptor in his fulness of fancy has chosen to give much more than these mere points of light, and has composed them of groups of figures. But if the ornament does not answer its purpose, if it have no distant, no truly decorative power; if generally seen it be a mere incrustation and meaningless roughness, we shall only be chagrined by finding when we look close, that the incrustation has cost years of labor, and has millions of figures and histories in it, and would be the better of being seen through a Stanhope lens. Hence the greatness of the northern Gothic as contrasted with the latest Italian. It reaches nearly the same extreme of detail; but it never loses sight of its architectural purpose, never fails in its decorative power; not a leaflet in it but speaks, and speaks far off, too; and so long as this be the case, there is no limit to the luxuriance in which such work may legitimately and nobly be bestowed.

XV. No limit: it is one of the affectations of architects to speak of overcharged ornament. Ornament cannot be overcharged if it be good, and is always overcharged when it is bad. I have given, on the opposite page (fig. 1), one of the smallest niches of the central gate of Rouen. That gate I suppose to be the most exquisite piece of pure flamboyant work existing; for though I have spoken of the upper portions, especially the receding window, as degenerate, the gate itself is of a purer period, and has hardly any renaissance taint. There are four strings of these niches (each with two figures beneath it) round the porch, from the ground to the top of the arch, with three intermediate rows of larger niches, far more elaborate; besides the six principal canopies of each outer pier. The total number of the subordinate niches alone, each worked like that in the plate, and each with a different pattern of traceries

in each compartment, is one hundred and seventy-six.⁴ Yet in all this ornament there is not one cusp, one finial that is useless—not a stroke of the chisel is in vain ; the grace and luxuriance of it all are visible—sensible rather—even to the uninquiring eye ; and all its minuteness does not diminish the majesty, while it increases the mystery, of the noble and unbroken vault. It is not less the boast of some styles that they can bear ornament, than of others that they can do without it ; but we do not often enough reflect that those very styles, of so haughty simplicity, owe part of their pleasurable-ness to contrast, and would be wearisome if universal. They are but the rests and monotonies of the art ; it is to its far happier, far higher, exaltation that we owe those fair fronts of variegated mosaic, charged with wild fancies and dark hosts of imagery, thicker and quainter than ever filled the depth of midsummer dream ; those vaulted gates, trellised with close leaves ; those window-labyrinths of twisted tracery and starry light ; those misty masses of multitudinous pinnacle and diademed tower ; the only witnesses, perhaps, that remain to us of the faith and fear of nations. All else for which the builders sacrificed, has passed away—all their living interests, and aims, and achievements. We know not for what they labored, and we see no evidence of their reward. Victory, wealth, authority, happiness—all have departed, though bought by many a bitter sacrifice. But of them, and their life, and their toil upon the earth, one reward, one evidence, is left to us in those gray heaps of deep wrought stone. They have taken with them to the grave their powers, their honors, and their errors ; but they have left us their adoration.

CHAPTER II.

THE LAMP OF TRUTH.

I. THERE is a marked likeness between the virtues of man and the enlightenment of the globe he inhabits—the same diminishing gradation in vigor up to the limits of their domains, the same essential separation from their contraries—the same twilight at the meeting of the two: a something wider belt than the line where the world rolls into night, that strange twilight of the virtues; that dusky debateable land, wherein zeal becomes impatience, and temperance becomes severity, and justice becomes cruelty, and faith superstition, and each and all vanish into gloom.

Nevertheless, with the greater number of them, though their dimness increases gradually, we may mark the moment of their sunset; and, happily, may turn the shadow back by the way by which it had gone down: but for one, the line of the horizon is irregular and undefined; and this, too, the very equator and girdle of them all—Truth; that only one of which there are no degrees, but breaks and rents continually; that pillar of the earth, yet a cloudy pillar; that golden and narrow line, which the very powers and virtues that lean upon it bend, which policy and prudence conceal, which kindness and courtesy modify, which courage overshadows with his shield, imagination covers with her wings, and charity dims with her tears. How difficult must the maintenance of that authority be, which, while it has to restrain the hostility of all the worst principles of man, has also to restrain the disorders of his best—which is continually assaulted by the one and betrayed by the other, and which regards with the same severity the lightest and the boldest violations of its law! There are some faults

slight in the sight of love, some errors slight in the estimate of wisdom ; but truth forgives no insult, and endures no stain.

We do not enough consider this ; nor enough dread the slight and continual occasions of offence against her. We are too much in the habit of looking at falsehood in its darkest associations, and through the color of its worst purposes. That indignation which we profess to feel at deceit absolute, is indeed only at deceit malicious. We resent calumny, hypocrisy and treachery, because they harm us, not because they are untrue. Take the detraction and the mischief from the untruth, and we are little offended by it ; turn it into praise, and we may be pleased with it. And yet it is not calumny nor treachery that does the largest sum of mischief in the world ; they are continually crushed, and are felt only in being conquered. But it is the glistening and softly spoken lie ; the amiable fallacy ; the patriotic lie of the historian, the provident lie of the politician, the zealous lie of the partizan, the merciful lie of the friend, and the careless lie of each man to himself, that cast that black mystery over humanity, through which any man who pierces, we thank as we would thank one who dug a well in a desert ; happy in that the thirst for truth still remains with us, even when we have wilfully left the fountains of it.

It would be well if moralists less frequently confused the greatness of a sin with its unpardonableness. The two characters are altogether distinct. The greatness of a fault depends partly on the nature of the person against whom it is committed, partly upon the extent of its consequences. Its pardonableness depends, humanly speaking, on the degree of temptation to it. One class of circumstances determines the weight of the attaching punishment ; the other, the claim to remission of punishment : and since it is not easy for men to estimate the relative weight, nor possible for them to know the relative consequences, of crime, it is usually wise in them to quit the care of such nice measurements, and to look to the other and clearer condition of culpability ; esteeming those faults worst which are committed under least temptation. I

do not mean to diminish the blame of the injurious and malicious sin, of the selfish and deliberate falsity ; yet it seems to me, that the shortest way to check the darker forms of deceit is to set watch more scrupulous against those which have mingled, unregarded and unchastised, with the current of our life. Do not let us lie at all. Do not think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended. Cast them all aside : they may be light and accidental ; but they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit, for all that ; and it is better that our hearts should be swept clean of them, without over care as to which is largest or blackest. Speaking truth is like writing fair, and comes only by practice ; it is less a matter of will than of habit, and I doubt if any occasion can be trivial which permits the practice and formation of such a habit. To speak and act truth with constancy and precision is nearly as difficult, and perhaps as meritorious, as to speak it under intimidation or penalty ; and it is a strange thought how many men there are, as I trust, who would hold to it at the cost of fortune or life, for one who would hold to it at the cost of a little daily trouble. And seeing that of all sin there is, perhaps, no one more flatly opposite to the Almighty, no one more “ wanting the good of virtue and of being,” than this of lying, it is surely a strange insolence to fall into the foulness of it on light or on no temptation, and surely becoming an honorable man to resolve that, whatever semblances or fallacies the necessary course of his life may compel him to bear or to believe, none shall disturb the serenity of his voluntary actions, nor diminish the reality of his chosen delights.

II. If this be just and wise for truth's sake, much more is it necessary for the sake of the delights over which she has influence. For, as I advocated the expression of the Spirit of Sacrifice in the acts and pleasures of men, not as if thereby those acts could further the cause of religion, but because most assuredly they might therein be infinitely ennobled themselves, so I would have the Spirit or Lamp of Truth clear in the hearts of our artists and handicraftsmen, not as if the truthful practice of handicrafts could far advance the cause of

truth, but because I would fain see the handicrafts themselves urged by the spurs of chivalry : and it is, indeed, marvellous to see what power and universality there is in this single principle, and how in the consulting or forgetting of it lies half the dignity or decline of every art and act of man. I have before endeavored to show its range and power in painting ; and I believe a volume, instead of a chapter, might be written on its authority over all that is great in architecture. But I must be content with the force of instances few and familiar, believing that the occasions of its manifestation may be more easily discovered by a desire to be true, than embraced by an analysis of truth.

Only it is very necessary in the outset to mark clearly wherein consists the essence of fallacy as distinguished from supposition.

III. For it might be at first thought that the whole kingdom of imagination was one of deception also. Not so : the action of the imagination is a voluntary summoning of the conceptions of things absent or impossible ; and the pleasure and nobility of the imagination partly consist in its knowledge and contemplation of them as such, *i.e.* in the knowledge of their actual absence or impossibility at the moment of their apparent presence or reality. When the imagination deceives it becomes madness. It is a noble faculty so long as it confesses its own ideality ; when it ceases to confess this, it is insanity. All the difference lies in the fact of the confession, in there being *no* deception. It is necessary to our rank as spiritual creatures, that we should be able to invent and to behold what is not ; and to our rank as moral creatures, that we should know and confess at the same time that it is not.

IV. Again, it might be thought, and has been thought, that the whole art of painting is nothing else than an endeavor to deceive. Not so : it is, on the contrary, a statement of certain facts, in the clearest possible way. For instance : I desire to give an account of a mountain or of a rock ; I begin by telling its shape. But words will not do this distinctly, and I draw its shape, and say, "This was its shape." Next : I would fain

represent its color ; but words will not do this either, and I dye the paper, and say, "This was its color." Such a process may be carried on until the scene appears to exist, and a high pleasure may be taken in its apparent existence. This is a communicated act of imagination, but no lie. The lie can consist only in an *assertion* of its existence (which is never for one instant made, implied, or believed), or else in false statements of forms and colors (which are, indeed, made and believed to our great loss, continually). And observe, also, that so degrading a thing is deception in even the approach and appearance of it, that all painting which even reaches the mark of apparent realization, is degraded in so doing. I have enough insisted on this point in another place.

V. The violations of truth, which dishonor poetry and painting, are thus for the most part confined to the treatment of their subjects. But in architecture another and a less subtle, more contemptible, violation of truth is possible ; a direct falsity of assertion respecting the nature of material, or the quantity of labor. And this is, in the full sense of the word, wrong ; it is as truly deserving of reprobation as any other moral delinquency ; it is unworthy alike of architects and of nations ; and it has been a sign, wherever it has widely and with toleration existed, of a singular debasement of the arts ; that it is not a sign of worse than this, of a general want of severe probity, can be accounted for only by our knowledge of the strange separation which has for some centuries existed between the arts and all other subjects of human intellect, as matters of conscience. This withdrawal of conscientiousness from among the faculties concerned with art, while it has destroyed the arts themselves, has also rendered in a measure nugatory the evidence which otherwise they might have presented respecting the character of the respective nations among whom they have been cultivated ; otherwise, it might appear more than strange that a nation so distinguished for its general uprightness and faith as the English, should admit in their architecture more of pretence, concealment, and deceit, than any other of this or of past time.

They are admitted in thoughtlessness, but with fatal effect upon the art in which they are practised. If there were no other causes for the failures which of late have marked every great occasion for architectural exertion, these petty dishonesties would be enough to account for all. It is the first step and not the least, towards greatness to do away with these; the first, because so evidently and easily in our power. We may not be able to command good, or beautiful, or inventive architecture; but we *can* command an honest architecture: the meagreness of poverty may be pardoned, the sternness of utility respected; but what is there but scorn for the meanness of deception?

VI. Architectural Deceits are broadly to be considered under three heads:—

1st. The suggestion of a mode of structure or support, other than the true one; as in pendants of late Gothic roofs.

2d. The painting of surfaces to represent some other material than that of which they actually consist (as in the marbling of wood), or the deceptive representation of sculptured ornament upon them.

3d. The use of cast or machine-made ornaments of any kind.

Now, it may be broadly stated, that architecture will be noble exactly in the degree in which all these false expedients are avoided. Nevertheless, there are certain degrees of them, which, owing to their frequent usage, or to other causes, have so far lost the nature of deceit as to be admissible; as, for instance, gilding, which is in architecture no deceit, because it is therein not understood for gold; while in jewellery it is a deceit, because it is so understood, and therefore altogether to be reprehended. So that there arise, in the application of the strict rules of right, many exceptions and niceties of conscience; which let us as briefly as possible examine.

VII. 1st. Structural Deceits. I have limited these to the determined and purposed suggestion of a mode of support other than the true one. The architect is not *bound* to exhibit

structure; nor are we to complain of him for concealing it, any more than we should regret that the outer surfaces of the human frame conceal much of its anatomy; nevertheless, that building will generally be the noblest, which to an intelligent eye discovers the great secrets of its structure, as an animal form does, although from a careless observer they may be concealed. In the vaulting of a Gothic roof it is no deceit to throw the strength into the ribs of it, and make the intermediate vault a mere shell. Such a structure would be presumed by an intelligent observer, the first time he saw such a roof; and the beauty of its traceries would be enhanced to him if they confessed and followed the lines of its main strength. If, however, the intermediate shell were made of wood instead of stone, and whitewashed to look like the rest,—this would, of course, be direct deceit, and altogether unpardonable.

There is, however, a certain deception necessarily occurring in Gothic architecture, which relates, not to the points, but to the manner, of support. The resemblance in its shafts and ribs to the external relations of stems and branches, which has been the ground of so much foolish speculation, necessarily induces in the mind of the spectator a sense or belief of a correspondent internal structure; that is to say, of a fibrous and continuous strength from the root into the limbs, and an elasticity communicated *upwards*, sufficient for the support of the ramified portions. The idea of the real conditions, of a great weight of ceiling thrown upon certain narrow, jointed lines, which have a tendency partly to be crushed, and partly to separate and be pushed outwards, is with difficulty received; and the more so when the pillars would be, if unassisted, too slight for the weight, and are supported by external flying buttresses, as in the apse of Beauvais, and other such achievements of the bolder Gothic. Now, there is a nice question of conscience in this, which we shall hardly settle but by considering that, when the mind is informed beyond the possibility of mistake as to the true nature of things, the affecting it with a contrary impression, however distinct, is no dishonesty, but on the contrary, a legitimate appeal to the imagination. For

instance, the greater part of the happiness which we have in contemplating clouds, results from the impression of their having massive, luminous, warm, and mountain-like surfaces; and our delight in the sky frequently depends upon our considering it as a blue vault. But we know the contrary, in both instances; we know the cloud to be a damp fog, or a drift of snow flakes; and the sky to be a lightless abyss. There is, therefore, no dishonesty, while there is much delight, in the irresistibly contrary impression. In the same way, so long as we see the stones and joints, and are not deceived as to the points of support in any piece of architecture, we may rather praise than regret the dextrous artifices which compel us to feel as if there were fibre in its shafts and life in its branches. Nor is even the concealment of the support of the external buttress reprehensible, so long as the pillars are not sensibly inadequate to their duty. For the weight of a roof is a circumstance of which the spectator generally has no idea, and the provisions for it, consequently, circumstances whose necessity or adaptation he could not understand. It is no deceit, therefore, when the weight to be borne is necessarily unknown, to conceal also the means of bearing it, leaving only to be perceived so much of the support as is indeed adequate to the weight supposed. For the shafts do, indeed, bear as much as they are ever imagined to bear, and the system of added support is no more, as a matter of conscience, to be exhibited, than, in the human or any other form, mechanical provisions for those functions which are themselves unperceived.

But the moment that the conditions of weight are comprehended, both truth and feeling require that the conditions of support should be also comprehended. Nothing can be worse, either as judged by the taste or the conscience, than affectedly inadequate supports—suspensions in air, and other such tricks and vanities. Mr. Hope wisely reprehends, for this reason, the arrangement of the main piers of St. Sophia at Constantinople. King's College Chapel, Cambridge, is a piece of architectural juggling, if possible still more to be condemned, because less sublime.

VIII. With deceptive concealments of structure are to be classed, though still more blameable, deceptive assumptions of it—the introduction of members which should have, or profess to have, a duty, and have none. One of the most general instances of this will be found in the form of the flying buttress in late Gothic. The use of that member is, of course, to convey support from one pier to another when the plan of the building renders it necessary or desirable that the supporting masses should be divided into groups, the most frequent necessity of this kind arising from the intermediate range of chapels or aisles between the nave or choir walls and their supporting piers. The natural, healthy, and beautiful arrangement is that of a steeply sloping bar of stone, sustained by an arch with its spandril carried farthest down on the lowest side, and dying into the vertical of the outer pier; that pier being, of course, not square, but rather a piece of wall set at right angles to the supported walls, and, if need be, crowned by a pinnacle to give it greater weight. The whole arrangement is exquisitely carried out in the choir of Beauvais. In later Gothic the pinnacle became gradually a decorative member, and was used in all places merely for the sake of its beauty. There is no objection to this; it is just as lawful to build a pinnacle for its beauty as a tower; but also the buttress became a decorative member; and was used, first, where it was not wanted, and, secondly, in forms in which it could be of no use, becoming a mere tie, not between the pier and wall, but between the wall and the top of the decorative pinnacle, thus attaching itself to the very point where its thrust, if it made any, could not be resisted. The most flagrant instance of this barbarism that I remember (though it prevails partially in all the spires of the Netherlands), is the lantern of St. Ouen at Rouen, where the pierced buttress, having an ogee curve, looks about as much calculated to bear a thrust as a switch of willow; and the pinnacles, huge and richly decorated, have evidently no work to do whatsoever, but stand round the central tower, like four idle servants, as they are—heraldic supporters, that central tower being merely a hollow crown, which needs no more buttressing than a

basket does. In fact, I do not know anything more strange or unwise than the praise lavished upon this lantern; it is one of the basest pieces of Gothic in Europe; its flamboyant traceries of the last and most degraded forms;⁵ and its entire plan and decoration resembling, and deserving little more credit than, the burnt sugar ornaments of elaborate confectionery. There are hardly any of the magnificent and serene constructions of the early Gothic which have not, in the course of time, been gradually thinned and pared away into these skeletons, which sometimes indeed, when their lines truly follow the structure of the original masses, have an interest like that of the fibrous framework of leaves from which the substance has been dissolved, but which are usually distorted as well as emaciated, and remain but the sickly phantoms and mockeries of things that were; they are to true architecture what the Greek ghost was to the armed and living frame; and the very winds that whistle through the threads of them, are to the diapasoned echoes of the ancient walls, as to the voice of the man was the pining of the spectre.⁶

IX. Perhaps the most fruitful source of these kinds of corruption which we have to guard against in recent times, is one which, nevertheless, comes in a "questionable shape," and of which it is not easy to determine the proper laws and limits; I mean the use of iron. The definition of the art of architecture, given in the first chapter, is independent of its materials: nevertheless, that art having been, up to the beginning of the present century, practised for the most part in clay, stone, or wood, it has resulted that the sense of proportion and the laws of structure have been based, the one altogether, the other in great part, on the necessities consequent on the employment of those materials; and that the entire or principal employment of metallic framework would, therefore, be generally felt as a departure from the first principles of the art. Abstractedly there appears no reason why iron should not be used as well as wood; and the time is probably near when a new system of architectural laws will be developed, adapted entirely to metallic construction. But I believe that the tendency of

all present sympathy and association is to limit the idea of architecture to non-metallic work; and that not without reason. For architecture being in its perfection the earliest, as in its elements it is necessarily the first, of arts, will always precede, in any barbarous nation, the possession of the science necessary either for the obtaining or the management of iron. Its first existence and its earliest laws must, therefore, depend upon the use of materials accessible in quantity, and on the surface of the earth; that is to say, clay, wood, or stone: and as I think it cannot but be generally felt that one of the chief dignities of architecture is its historical use; and since the latter is partly dependent on consistency of style, it will be felt right to retain as far as may be, even in periods of more advanced science, the materials and principles of earlier ages.

X. But whether this be granted me or not, the fact is, that every idea respecting size, proportion, decoration, or construction, on which we are at present in the habit of acting or judging, depends on presupposition of such materials: and as I both feel myself unable to escape the influence of these prejudices, and believe that my readers will be equally so, it may be perhaps permitted to me to assume that true architecture does not admit iron as a constructive material,⁷ and that such works as the cast-iron central spire of Rouen Cathedral, or the iron roofs and pillars of our railway stations, and of some of our churches, are not architecture at all. Yet it is evident that metals may, and sometimes must, enter into the construction to a certain extent, as nails in wooden architecture, and therefore as legitimately rivets and solderings in stone; neither can we well deny to the Gothic architect the power of supporting statues, pinnacles, or traceries by iron bars; and if we grant this, I do not see how we can help allowing Brunelleschi his iron chain around the dome of Florence, or the builders of Salisbury their elaborate iron binding of the central tower.⁸ If, however, we would not fall into the old sophistry of the grains of corn and the heap, we must find a rule which may enable us to stop somewhere. This rule is, I think, that metals may be used as a *cement* but not as a *support*. For as cements of

other kinds are often so strong that the stones may easier be broken than separated, and the wall becomes a solid mass without for that reason losing the character of architecture, there is no reason why, when a nation has obtained the knowledge and practice of iron work, metal rods or rivets should not be used in the place of cement, and establish the same or a greater strength and adherence, without in any wise inducing departure from the types and system of architecture before established; nor does it make any difference except as to sightliness, whether the metal bands or rods so employed, be in the body of the wall or on its exterior, or set as stays and cross-bands; so only that the use of them be always and distinctly one which might be superseded by mere strength of cement; as for instance if a pinnacle or mullion be propped or tied by an iron band, it is evident that the iron only prevents the separation of the stones by lateral force, which the cement would have done, had it been strong enough. But the moment that the iron in the least degree takes the place of the stone, and acts by its resistance to crushing, and bears superincumbent weight, or if it acts by its own weight as a counterpoise, and so supersedes the use of pinnacles or buttresses in resisting a lateral thrust, or if, in the form of a rod or girder, it is used to do what wooden beams would have done as well, that instant the building ceases, so far as such applications of metal extend, to be true architecture.

XI. The limit, however, thus determined, is an ultimate one, and it is well in all things to be cautious how we approach the utmost limit of lawfulness; so that, although the employment of metal within this limit cannot be considered as destroying the very being and nature of architecture, it will, if extravagant and frequent, derogate from the dignity of the work, as well as (which is especially to our present point) from its honesty. For although the spectator is not informed as to the quantity or strength of the cement employed, he will generally conceive the stones of the building to be separable; and his estimate of the skill of the architect will be based in a great measure on his supposition of this condition, and of the diffi-

calties attendant upon it : so that it is always more honorable, and it has a tendency to render the style of architecture both more masculine and more scientific, to employ stone and mortar simply as such, and to do as much as possible with the weight of the one and the strength of the other, and rather sometimes to forego a grace, or to confess a weakness, than attain the one, or conceal the other, by means verging upon dishonesty.

Nevertheless, where the design is of such delicacy and slightness as, in some parts of very fair and finished edifices, it is desirable that it should be ; and where both its completion and security are in a measure dependent on the use of metal, let not such use be reprehended ; so only that as much is done as may be, by good mortar and good masonry ; and no slovenly workmanship admitted through confidence in the iron helps ; for it is in this license as in that of wine, a man may use it for his infirmities, but not for his nourishment.

XII. And, in order to avoid an over use of this liberty, it would be well to consider what application may be conveniently made of the dovetailing and various adjusting of stones ; for when any artifice is necessary to help the mortar, certainly this ought to come before the use of metal, for it is both safer and more honest. I cannot see that any objection can be made to the fitting of the stones in any shapes the architect pleases : for although it would not be desirable to see buildings put together like Chinese puzzles, there must always be a check upon such an abuse of the practice in its difficulty ; nor is it necessary that it should be always exhibited, so that it be understood by the spectator as an admitted help, and that no principal stones are introduced in positions apparently impossible for them to retain, although a riddle here and there, in unimportant features, may sometimes serve to draw the eye to the masonry, and make it interesting, as well as to give a delightful sense of a kind of necromantic power in the architect. There is a pretty one in the lintel of the lateral door of the cathedral of Prato (Plate IV. fig. 4.) ; where the maintenance of the visibly separate stones, alternate marble and serpentine, cannot be

understood until their cross-cutting is seen below. Each block is, of course, of the form given in fig. 5.

XIII. Lastly, before leaving the subject of structural de-
ceits, I would remind the architect who thinks that I am un-
necessarily and narrowly limiting his resources or his art, that
the highest greatness and the highest wisdom are shown, the
first by a noble submission to, the second by a thoughtful
providence for, certain voluntarily admitted restraints. No-
thing is more evident than this, in that supreme government
which is the example, as it is the centre, of all others. The
Divine Wisdom is, and can be, shown to us only in its meeting
and contending with the difficulties which are voluntarily, and
for the sake of that contest, admitted by the Divine Omnipot-
ence: and these difficulties, observe, occur in the form of
natural laws or ordinances, which might, at many times and in
countless ways, be infringed with apparent advantage, but
which are never infringed, whatever costly arrangements or
adaptations their observance may necessitate for the accom-
plishment of given purposes. The example most apposite to
our present subject is the structure of the bones of animals.
No reason can be given, I believe, why the system of the
higher animals should not have been made capable, as that of
the *Infusoria* is, of secreting flint, instead of phosphate of
lime, or more naturally still, carbon; so framing the bones of
adamant at once. The elephant or rhinoceros, had the earthy
part of their bones been made of diamond, might have been
as agile and light as grasshoppers, and other animals might
have been framed far more magnificently colossal than any
that walk the earth. In other worlds we may, perhaps, see
such creations; a creation for every element, and elements in-
finite. But the architecture of animals *here*, is appointed by
God to be a marble architecture, not a flint nor adamant archi-
tecture; and all manner of expedients are adopted to attain
the utmost degree of strength and size possible under that
great limitation. The jaw of the ichthyosaurus is pieced and
riveted, the leg of the megatherium is a foot thick, and the
head of the myodon has a double skull; we, in our wisdom,

should, doubtless, have given the lizard a steel jaw, and the myodon a cast-iron headpiece, and forgotten the great principle to which all creation bears witness, that order and system are nobler things than power. But God shows us in Himself, strange as it may seem, not only authoritative perfection, but even the perfection of Obedience—an obedience to His own laws: and in the cumbrous movement of those unwieldiest of His creatures we are reminded, even in His divine essence, of that attribute of uprightness in the human creature “that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.”

XIV. 2d. Surface Deceits. These may be generally defined as the inducing the supposition of some form or material which does not actually exist; as commonly in the painting of wood to represent marble, or in the painting of ornaments in deceptive relief, &c. But we must be careful to observe, that the evil of them consists always in definitely attempted *deception*, and that it is a matter of some nicety to mark the point where deception begins or ends.

Thus, for instance, the roof of Milan Cathedral is seemingly covered with elaborate fan tracery, forcibly enough painted to enable it, in its dark and removed position, to deceive a careless observer. This is, of course, gross degradation; it destroys much of the dignity even of the rest of the building, and is in the very strongest terms to be reprehended.

The roof of the Sistine Chapel has much architectural design in grissaille mingled with the figures of its frescoes; and the effect is increase of dignity.

In what lies the distinctive character?

In two points, principally:—First. That the architecture is so closely associated with the figures, and has so grand fellowship with them in its forms and cast shadows, that both are at once felt to be of a piece; and as the figures must necessarily be painted, the architecture is known to be so too. There is thus no deception.

Second. That so great a painter as Michael Angelo would always stop short in such minor parts of his design, of the degree of vulgar force which would be necessary to induce the

supposition of their reality ; and, strangely as it may sound, would never paint badly enough to deceive.

But though right and wrong are thus found broadly opposed in works severally so mean and so mighty as the roof of Milan and that of the Sistine, there are works neither so great nor so mean, in which the limits of right are vaguely defined, and will need some care to determine ; care only, however, to apply accurately the broad principle with which we set out, that no form nor material is to be *deceptively* represented.

XV. Evidently, then, painting, confessedly such, is no deception : it does not assert any material whatever. Whether it be on wood or on stone, or, as will naturally be supposed, on plaster, does not matter. Whatever the material, good painting makes it more precious ; nor can it ever be said to deceive respecting the ground of which it gives us no information. To cover brick with plaster, and this plaster with fresco, is, therefore, perfectly legitimate ; and as desirable a mode of decoration as it is constant in the great periods. Verona and Venice are now seen deprived of more than half their former splendor ; it depended far more on their frescoes than their marbles. The plaster, in this case, is to be considered as the gesso ground on panel or canvas. But to cover brick with cement, and to divide this cement with joints that it may look like stone, is to tell a falsehood ; and is just as contemptible a procedure as the other is noble.

It being lawful to paint then, is it lawful to paint everything ? So long as the painting is confessed—yes ; but if, even in the slightest degree, the sense of it be lost, and the thing painted be supposed real—no. Let us take a few instances. In the Campo Santo at Pisa, each fresco is surrounded with a border composed of flat colored patterns of great elegance—no part of it in attempted relief. The certainty of flat surface being thus secured, the figures, though the size of life, do not deceive, and the artist thenceforward is at liberty to put forth his whole power, and to lead us through fields and groves, and depths of pleasant landscape, and to soothe us with the sweet clearness of far off sky, and yet never lose the severity of his primal purpose of architectural decoration.

In the Camera di Correggio of San Lodovico at Parma, the trellises of vine shadow the walls, as if with an actual arbor ; and the troops of children, peeping through the oval openings, luscious in color and faint in light, may well be expected every instant to break through, or hide behind the covert. The grace of their attitudes, and the evident greatness of the whole work, mark that it is painting, and barely redeem it from the charge of falsehood ; but even so saved, it is utterly unworthy to take a place among noble or legitimate architectural decoration.

In the cupola of the duomo of Parma the same painter has represented the Assumption with so much deceptive power, that he has made a dome of some thirty feet diameter look like a cloud-wrapt opening in the seventh heaven, crowded with a rushing sea of angels. Is this wrong? Not so : for the subject at once precludes the possibility of deception. We might have taken the vines for a veritable pergoda, and the children for its haunting ragazzi ; but we know the stayed clouds and moveless angels must be man's work ; let him put his utmost strength to it and welcome, he can enchant us, but cannot betray.

We may thus apply the rule to the highest, as well as the art of daily occurrence, always remembering that more is to be forgiven to the great painter than to the mere decorative workman ; and this especially, because the former, even in deceptive portions, will not trick us so grossly ; as we have just seen in Correggio, where a worse painter would have made the thing look like life at once. There is, however, in room, villa, or garden decoration, some fitting admission of trickeries of this kind, as of pictured landscapes at the extremities of alleys and arcades, and ceilings like skies, or painted with prolongations upwards of the architecture of the walls, which things have sometimes a certain luxury and pleasureableness in places meant for idleness, and are innocent enough as long as they are regarded as mere toys.

XVI. Touching the false representation of material, the question is infinitely more simple, and the law more sweeping ; all such imitations are utterly base and inadmissible. It is

melancholy to think of the time and expense lost in marbling the shop fronts of London alone, and of the waste of our resources in absolute vanities, in things about which no mortal cares, by which no eye is ever arrested, unless painfully, and which do not add one whit to comfort, or cleanliness, or even to that great object of commercial art—conspicuousness. But in architecture of a higher rank, how much more is it to be condemned? I have made it a rule in the present work not to blame specifically; but I may, perhaps, be permitted, while I express my sincere admiration of the very noble entrance and general architecture of the British Museum, to express also my regret that the noble granite foundation of the staircase should be mocked at its landing by an imitation, the more blameable because tolerably successful. The only effect of it is to cast a suspicion upon the true stones below, and upon every bit of granite afterwards encountered. One feels a doubt, after it, of the honesty of Memmon himself. But even this, however derogatory to the noble architecture around it, is less painful than the want of feeling with which, in our cheap modern churches, we suffer the wall decorator to erect about the altar frameworks and pediments daubed with mottled color, and to dye in the same fashions such skeletons or caricatures of columns as may emerge above the pews: this is not merely bad taste; it is no unimportant or excusable error which brings even these shadows of vanity and falsehood into the house of prayer. The first condition which just feeling requires in church furniture is, that it should be simple and unaffected, not fictitious nor tawdry. It may be in our power to make it beautiful, but let it at least be pure; and if we cannot permit much to the architect, do not let us permit anything to the upholsterer; if we keep to solid stone and solid wood, whitewashed, if we like, for cleanliness' sake (for whitewash has so often been used as the dress of noble things that it has thence received a kind of nobility itself), it must be a bad design indeed, which is grossly offensive. I recollect no instance of a want of sacred character, or of any marked and painful ugliness, in the simplest or the most awkwardly built village church, where stone and wood

were roughly and nakedly used, and the windows latticed with white glass. But the smoothly stuccoed walls, the flat roofs with ventilator ornaments, the barred windows with jaundiced borders and dead ground square panes, the gilded or bronzed wood, the painted iron, the wretched upholstery of curtains and cushions, and pew heads and altar railings, and Birmingham metal candlesticks, and, above all, the green and yellow sickness of the false marble—disguises all, observe; falsehoods all—who are they who like these things? who defend them? who do them? I have never spoken to any one who *did* like them, though to many who thought them matters of no consequence. Perhaps not to religion (though I cannot but believe that there are many to whom, as to myself, such things are serious obstacles to the repose of mind and temper which should precede devotional exercises); but to the general tone of our judgment and feeling—yes; for assuredly we shall regard, with tolerance, if not with affection, whatever forms of material things we have been in the habit of associating with our worship, and be little prepared to detect or blame hypocrisy, meanness, and disguise in other kinds of decoration when we suffer objects belonging to the most solemn of all services to be tricked out in a fashion so fictitious and unseemly.

XVII. Painting, however, is not the only mode in which material may be concealed, or rather simulated; for merely to conceal is, as we have seen, no wrong. Whitewash, for instance, though often (by no means always) to be regretted as a concealment, is not to be blamed as a falsity. It shows itself for what it is, and asserts nothing of what is beneath it. Gilding has become, from its frequent use, equally innocent. It is understood for what it is, a film merely, and is, therefore, allowable to any extent. I do not say expedient: it is one of the most abused means of magnificence we possess, and I much doubt whether any use we ever make of it, balances that loss of pleasure, which, from the frequent sight and perpetual suspicion of it, we suffer in the contemplation of anything that is verily of gold. I think gold was meant to be seldom seen and to be admired as a pre-

cious thing; and I sometimes wish that truth should so far literally prevail as that all should be gold that glittered, or rather that nothing should glitter that was not gold. Nevertheless, nature herself does not dispense with such semblance, but uses light for it; and I have too great a love for old and saintly art to part with its burnished field, or radiant nimbus; only it should be used with respect, and to express magnificence, or sacredness, and not in lavish vanity, or in sign painting. Of its expedience, however, any more than of that of color, it is not here the place to speak; we are endeavoring to determine what is lawful, not what is desirable. Of other and less common modes of disguising surface, as of powder of lapis lazuli, or mosaic imitations of colored stones, I need hardly speak. The rule will apply to all alike, that whatever is pretended, is wrong; commonly enforced also by the exceeding ugliness and insufficient appearance of such methods, as lately in the style of renovation by which half the houses in Venice have been defaced, the brick covered first with stucco, and this painted with zigzag veins in imitation of alabaster. But there is one more form of architectural fiction, which is so constant in the great periods that it needs respectful judgment. I mean the facing of brick with precious stone.

XVIII. It is well known, that what is meant by a church's being built of marble is, in nearly all cases, only that a veneering of marble has been fastened on the rough brick wall, built with certain projections to receive it; and that what appear to be massy stones, are nothing more than external slabs.

Now, it is evident, that, in this case, the question of right is on the same ground as in that of gilding. If it be clearly understood that a marble facing does not pretend or imply a marble wall, there is no harm in it; and as it is also evident that, when very precious stones are used, as jaspers and serpentes, it must become, not only an extravagant and vain increase of expense, but sometimes an actual impossibility, to obtain mass of them enough to build with, there is no resource but this of veneering; nor is there anything to be alleged against it on the head of durability, such work having been by

experience found to last as long, and in as perfect condition, as any kind of masonry. It is, therefore, to be considered as simply an art of mosaic on a large scale, the ground being of brick, or any other material; and when lovely stones are to be obtained, it is a manner which should be thoroughly understood, and often practised. Nevertheless, as we esteem the shaft of a column more highly for its being of a single block, and as we do not regret the loss of substance and value which there is in things of solid gold, silver, agate, or ivory; so I think that walls themselves may be regarded with a more just complacency if they are known to be all of noble substance; and that rightly weighing the demands of the two principles of which we have hitherto spoken—Sacrifice and Truth, we should sometimes rather spare external ornament than diminish the unseen value and consistency of what we do; and I believe that a better manner of design, and a more careful and studious, if less abundant decoration would follow, upon the consciousness of thoroughness in the substance. And, indeed, this is to be remembered, with respect to all the points we have examined; that while we have traced the limits of license, we have not fixed those of that high rectitude which refuses license. It is thus true that there is no falsity, and much beauty in the use of external color, and that it is lawful to paint either pictures or patterns on whatever surfaces may seem to need enrichment. But it is not less true, that such practices are essentially unarchitectural; and while we cannot say that there is actual danger in an over use of them, seeing that they have been *always* used most lavishly in the times of most noble art, yet they divide the work into two parts and kinds, one of less durability than the other, which dies away from it in process of ages, and leaves it, unless it have noble qualities of its own, naked and bare. That enduring noblesse I should, therefore, call truly architectural; and it is not until this has been secured that the accessory power of painting may be called in, for the delight of the immediate time; nor this, as I think, until every resource of a more stable kind has been exhausted. The true colors of architecture are those of natural stone, and

I would fain see these taken advantage of to the full. Every variety of hue, from pale yellow to purple, passing through orange, red, and brown, is entirely at our command; nearly every kind of green and gray is also attainable: and with these, and pure white, what harmonies might we not achieve? Of stained and variegated stone, the quantity is unlimited, the kinds innumerable; where brighter colors are required, let glass, and gold protected by glass, be used in mosaic—a kind of work as durable as the solid stone, and incapable of losing its lustre by time—and let the painter's work be reserved for the shadowed *loggia* and inner chamber. This is the true and faithful way of building; where this cannot be, the device of external coloring may, indeed, be employed without dishonor; but it must be with the warning reflection, that a time will come when such aids must pass away, and when the building will be judged in its lifelessness, dying the death of the dolphin. Better the less bright, more enduring fabric. The transparent alabasters of San Miniato, and the mosaics of St. Mark's, are more warmly filled, and more brightly touched, by every return of morning and evening rays; while the hues of our cathedrals have died like the iris out of the cloud; and the temples whose azure and purple once flamed above the Grecian promontories, stand in their faded whiteness, like snows which the sunset has left cold.

XIX. The last form of fallacy which it will be remembered we had to deprecate, was the substitution of cast or machine work for that of the hand, generally expressible as Operative Deceit.

There are two reasons, both weighty, against this practice; one, that all cast and machine work is bad, as work; the other, that it is dishonest. Of its badness, I shall speak in another place, that being evidently no efficient reason against its use when other cannot be had. Its dishonesty, however, which, to my mind, is of the grossest kind, is, I think, a sufficient reason to determine absolute and unconditional rejection of it.

Ornament, as I have often before observed, has two entirely distinct sources of agreeableness: one, that of the abstract

Plate II



beauty of its forms, which, for the present, we will suppose to be the same whether they come from the hand or the machine; the other, the sense of human labor and care spent upon it. How great this latter influence we may perhaps judge, by considering that there is not a cluster of weeds growing in any cranny of ruin which has not a beauty in all respects *nearly* equal, and, in some, immeasurably superior, to that of the most elaborate sculpture of its stones: and that all our interest in the carved work, our sense of its richness, though it is tenfold less rich than the knots of grass beside it; of its delicacy, though it is a thousandfold less delicate; of its admirableness, though a millionfold less admirable; results from our consciousness of its being the work of poor, clumsy, toilsome man. Its true delightfulness depends on our discovering in it the record of thoughts, and intents, and trials, and heart-breakings—of recoveries and joyfulnesses of success: all this *can* be traced by a practised eye; but, granting it even obscure, it is presumed or understood; and in that is the worth of the thing, just as much as the worth of anything else we call precious. The worth of a diamond is simply the understanding of the time it must take to look for it before it can be cut. It has an intrinsic value besides, which the diamond has not (for a diamond has no more real beauty than a piece of glass); but I do not speak of that at present; I place the two on the same ground; and I suppose that hand-wrought ornament can no more be generally known from machine work, than a diamond can be known from paste; nay, that the latter may deceive, for a moment, the mason's, as the other the jeweller's eye; and that it can be detected only by the closest examination. Yet exactly as a woman of feeling would not wear false jewels, so would a builder of honor disdain false ornaments. The using of them is just as downright and inexcusable a lie. You use that which pretends to a worth which it has not; which pretends to have cost, and to be, what it did not, and is not; it is an imposition, a vulgarity, an impertinence, and a sin. Down with it to the ground, grind it to powder, leave its ragged place upon the wall, rather; you have not paid for it, you have

no business with it, you do not want it. Nobody wants ornaments in this world, but everybody wants integrity. All the fair devices that ever were fancied, are not worth a lie. Leave your walls as bare as a planed board, or build them of baked mud and chopped straw, if need be; but do not rough-cast them with falsehood.

This, then, being our general law, and I hold it for a more imperative one than any other I have asserted; and this kind of dishonesty the meanest, as the least necessary; for ornament is an extravagant and inessential thing; and, therefore, if fallacious, utterly base—this, I say, being our general law, there are, nevertheless, certain exceptions respecting particular substances and their uses.

XX. Thus in the use of brick; since that is known to be originally moulded, there is no reason why it should not be moulded into diverse forms. It will never be supposed to have been cut, and, therefore, will cause no deception; it will have only the credit it deserves. In flat countries, far from any quarry of stone, cast brick may be legitimately, and most successfully, used in decoration, and that elaborate, and even refined. The brick mouldings of the Palazzo Pepoli at Bologna, and those which run round the market-place of Vercelli, are among the richest in Italy. So also, tile and porcelain work, of which the former is grotesquely, but successfully, employed in the domestic architecture of France, colored tiles being inserted in the diamond spaces between the crossing timbers; and the latter admirably in Tuscany, in external bas-reliefs, by the Robbia family, in which works, while we cannot but sometimes regret the useless and ill-arranged colors, we would by no means blame the employment of a material which, whatever its defects, excels every other in permanence, and, perhaps, requires even greater skill in its management than marble. For it is not the material, but the absence of the human labor, which makes the thing worthless; and a piece of terra cotta, or of plaster of Paris, which has been wrought by human hand, is worth all the stone in Carrara, cut by machinery. It is, indeed, possible, and even usual, for men to sink

into machines themselves, so that even hand-work has all the characters of mechanism; of the difference between living and dead hand-work I shall speak presently; all that I ask at present is, what it is always in our power to secure—the confession of what we have done, and what we have given; so that when we use stone at all, since all stone is naturally supposed to be carved by hand, we must not carve it by machinery; neither must we use any artificial stone cast into shape, nor any stucco ornaments of the color of stone, or which might in anywise be mistaken for it, as the stucco mouldings in the cortile of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence, which cast a shame and suspicion over every part of the building. But for ductile and fusible materials, as clay, iron, and bronze, since these will usually be supposed to have been cast or stamped, it is at our pleasure to employ them as we will; remembering that they become precious, or otherwise, just in proportion to the hand-work upon them, or to the clearness of their reception of the hand-work of their mould.

But I believe no cause to have been more active in the degradation of our natural feeling for beauty, than the constant use of cast iron ornaments. The common iron work of the middle ages was as simple as it was effective, composed of leaf-age cut flat out of sheet iron, and twisted at the workman's will. No ornaments, on the contrary, are so cold, clumsy, and vulgar, so essentially incapable of a fine line, or shadow, as those of cast iron; and while, on the score of truth, we can hardly allege anything against them, since they are always distinguishable, at a glance, from wrought and hammered work, and stand only for what they are, yet I feel very strongly that there is no hope of the progress of the arts of any nation which indulges in these vulgar and cheap substitutes for real decoration. Their inefficiency and paltriness I shall endeavor to show more conclusively in another place, enforcing only, at present, the general conclusion that, if even honest or allowable, they are things in which we can never take just pride or pleasure, and must never be employed in any place wherein they might either themselves obtain the credit of being other

and better than they are, or be associated with the downright work to which it would be a disgrace to be found in their company.

Such are, I believe, the three principal kinds of fallacy by which architecture is liable to be corrupted; there are, however, other and more subtle forms of it, against which it is less easy to guard by definite law, than by the watchfulness of a manly and unaffected spirit. For, as it has been above noticed, there are certain kinds of deception which extend to impressions and ideas only; of which some are, indeed, of a noble use, as that above referred to, the arborescent look of lofty Gothic aisles; but of which the most part have so much of legerdemain and trickery about them, that they will lower any style in which they considerably prevail; and they are likely to prevail when once they are admitted, being apt to catch the fancy alike of uninventive architects and feelingless spectators; just as mean and shallow minds are, in other matters, delighted with the sense of over-reaching, or tickled with the conceit of detecting the intention to over-reach; and when subtleties of this kind are accompanied by the display of such dextrous stone-cutting, or architectural sleight of hand, as may become, even by itself, a subject of admiration, it is a great chance if the pursuit of them do not gradually draw us away from all regard and care for the nobler character of the art, and end in its total paralysis or extinction. And against this there is no guarding, but by stern disdain of all display of dexterity and ingenious device, and by putting the whole force of our fancy into the arrangement of masses and forms, caring no more how these masses and forms are wrought out, than a great painter cares which way his pencil strikes. It would be easy to give many instances of the danger of these tricks and vanities; but I shall confine myself to the examination of one which has, as I think, been the cause of the fall of Gothic architecture throughout Europe. I mean the system of intersectional mouldings, which, on account of its great importance, and for the sake of the general reader, I may, perhaps, be pardoned for explaining elementarily.

Plate III.



XXI. I must, in the first place, however, refer to Professor Willis's account of the origin of tracery, given in the sixth chapter of his *Architecture of the Middle Ages*; since the publication of which I have been not a little amazed to hear of any attempts made to resuscitate the inexcusably absurd theory of its derivation from imitated vegetable form—inexcusably, I say, because the smallest acquaintance with early Gothic architecture would have informed the supporters of that theory of the simple fact, that, exactly in proportion to the antiquity of the work, the imitation of such organic forms is less, and in the earliest examples does not exist at all. There cannot be the shadow of a question, in the mind of a person familiarised with any single series of consecutive examples, that tracery arose from the gradual enlargement of the penetrations of the shield of stone which, usually supported by a central pillar, occupied the head of early windows. Professor Willis, perhaps, confines his observations somewhat too absolutely to the double sub-arch. I have given, in Plate VII. fig. 2, an interesting case of rude penetration of a high and simply trefoiled shield, from the church of the Eremitani at Padua. But the more frequent and typical form is that of the double sub-arch, decorated with various piercings of the space between it and the superior arch; with a simple trefoil under a round arch, in the Abbaye aux Hommes, Caen⁹ (Plate III. fig. 1); with a very beautifully proportioned quatrefoil in the triforium of Eu, and that of the choir of Lisieux; with quatrefoils, sixfoils, and septfoils, in the transept towers of Rouen (Plate III. fig. 2); with a trefoil awkwardly, and very small quatrefoil above, at Coutances, (Plate III. fig. 3); then, with multiplications of the same figures, pointed or round, giving very clumsy shapes of the intermediate stone (fig. 4, from one of the nave chapels of Rouen, fig. 5, from one of the nave chapels of Bayeux), and finally, by thinning out the stony ribs, reaching conditions like that of the glorious typical form of the clerestory of the apse of Beauvais (fig. 6).

XXII. Now, it will be noticed that, during the whole of this process, the attention is kept fixed on the forms of the

penetrations, that is to say, of the lights as seen from the interior, not of the intermediate stone. All the grace of the window is in the outline of its light; and I have drawn all these traceries as seen from within, in order to show the effect of the light thus treated, at first in far off and separate stars, and then gradually enlarging, approaching, until they come and stand over us, as it were, filling the whole space with their effulgence. And it is in this pause of the star, that we have the great, pure, and perfect form of French Gothic; it was at the instant when the rudeness of the intermediate space had been finally conquered, when the light had expanded to its fullest, and yet had not lost its radiant unity, principality, and visible first causing of the whole, that we have the most exquisite feeling and most faultless judgments in the management alike of the tracery and decorations. I have given, in Plate X., an exquisite example of it, from a panel decoration of the buttresses of the north door of Rouen; and in order that the reader may understand what truly fine Gothic work is, and how nobly it unites fantasy and law, as well as for our immediate purpose, it will be well that he should examine its sections and mouldings in detail (they are described in the fourth Chapter, § xxvii.), and that the more carefully, because this design belongs to a period in which the most important change took place in the spirit of Gothic architecture, which, perhaps, ever resulted from the natural progress of any art. That tracery marks a pause between the laying aside of one great ruling principle, and the taking up of another; a pause as marked, as clear, as conspicuous to the distant view of after times, as to the distant glance of the traveller is the culminating ridge of the mountain chain over which he has passed. It was the great watershed of Gothic art. Before it, all had been ascent; after it, all was decline; both, indeed, by winding paths and varied slopes; both interrupted, like the gradual rise and fall of the passes of the Alps, by great mountain outliers, isolated or branching from the central chain, and by retrograde or parallel directions of the valleys of access. But the track of the human mind is

traceable up to that glorious ridge, in a continuous line, and thence downwards. Like a silver zone—

“Flung about carelessly, it shines afar,
 Catching the eye in many a broken link,
 In many a turn and traverse, as it glides.
 And oft above, and oft below, appears—
 * * * * to him who journeys up
 As though it were another.”

And at that point, and that instant, reaching the place that was nearest heaven, the builders looked back, for the last time, to the way by which they had come, and the scenes through which their early course had passed. They turned away from them and their morning light, and descended towards a new horizon, for a time in the warmth of western sun, but plunging with every forward step into more cold and melancholy shade.

XXIII. The change of which I speak, is inexpressible in few words, but one more important, more radically influential, could not be. It was the substitution of the *line* for the *mass*, as the element of decoration.

We have seen the mode in which the openings or penetration of the window expanded, until what were, at first, awkward forms of intermediate stone, became delicate lines of tracery: and I have been careful in pointing out the peculiar attention bestowed on the proportion and decoration of the mouldings of the window at Rouen, in Plate X., as compared with earlier mouldings, because that beauty and care are singularly significant. They mark that the traceries had *caught the eye* of the architect. Up to that time, up to the very last instant in which the reduction and thinning of the intervening stone was consummated, his eye had been on the openings only, on the stars of light. He did not care about the stone, a rude border of moulding was all he needed, it was the penetrating shape which he was watching. But when that shape had received its last possible expansion, and when the stone-work became an arrangement of graceful and parallel lines, that arrangement, like some form in a picture, unseen and accidentally developed, struck suddenly, inevitably, on the sight. It had literally not ~~been~~ seen before. It flashed out in an instant as an indepen-

dent form. It became a feature of the work. The architect took it under his care, thought over it, and distributed its members as we see.

Now, the great pause was at the moment when the space and the dividing stone-work were both equally considered. It did not last fifty years. The forms of the tracery were seized with a childish delight in the novel source of beauty; and the intervening space was cast aside, as an element of decoration, for ever. I have confined myself, in following this change, to the window, as the feature in which it is clearest. But the transition is the same in every member of architecture; and its importance can hardly be understood, unless we take the pains to trace it in the universality, of which illustrations, irrelevant to our present purpose, will be found in the third Chapter. I pursue here the question of truth, relating to the treatment of the mouldings.

XXIV. The reader will observe that, up to the last expansion of the penetrations, the stone-work was necessarily considered, as it actually is, *stiff*, and unyielding. It was so, also, during the pause of which I have spoken, when the forms of the tracery were still severe and pure; delicate indeed, but perfectly firm.

At the close of the period of pause, the first sign of serious change was like a low breeze, passing through the emaciated tracery, and making it tremble. It began to undulate like the threads of a cobweb lifted by the wind. It lost its essence as a structure of stone. Reduced to the slenderness of threads, it began to be considered as possessing also their flexibility. The architect was pleased with this his new fancy, and set himself to carry it out; and in a little time, the bars of tracery were caused to appear to the eye as if they had been woven together like a net. This was a change which sacrificed a great principle of truth; it sacrificed the expression of the qualities of the material; and, however delightful its results in their first developments, it was ultimately ruinous.

For, observe the difference between the supposition of ductility, and that of elastic structure noticed above in the resem-

blance to tree form. That resemblance was not sought, but necessary; it resulted from the natural conditions of strength in the pier or trunk, and slenderness in the ribs or branches, while many of the other suggested conditions of resemblance were perfectly true. A tree branch, though in a certain sense flexible, is not ductile; it is as firm in its own form as the rib of stone; both of them will yield up to certain limits, both of them breaking when those limits are exceeded; while the tree trunk will bend no more than the stone pillar. But when the tracery is assumed to be as yielding as a silken cord; when the whole fragility, elasticity, and weight of the material are to the eye, if not in terms, denied; when all the art of the architect is applied to disprove the first conditions of his working, and the first attributes of his materials; *this* is a deliberate treachery, only redeemed from the charge of direct falsehood by the visibility of the stone surface, and degrading all the tracteries it affects exactly in the degree of its presence.

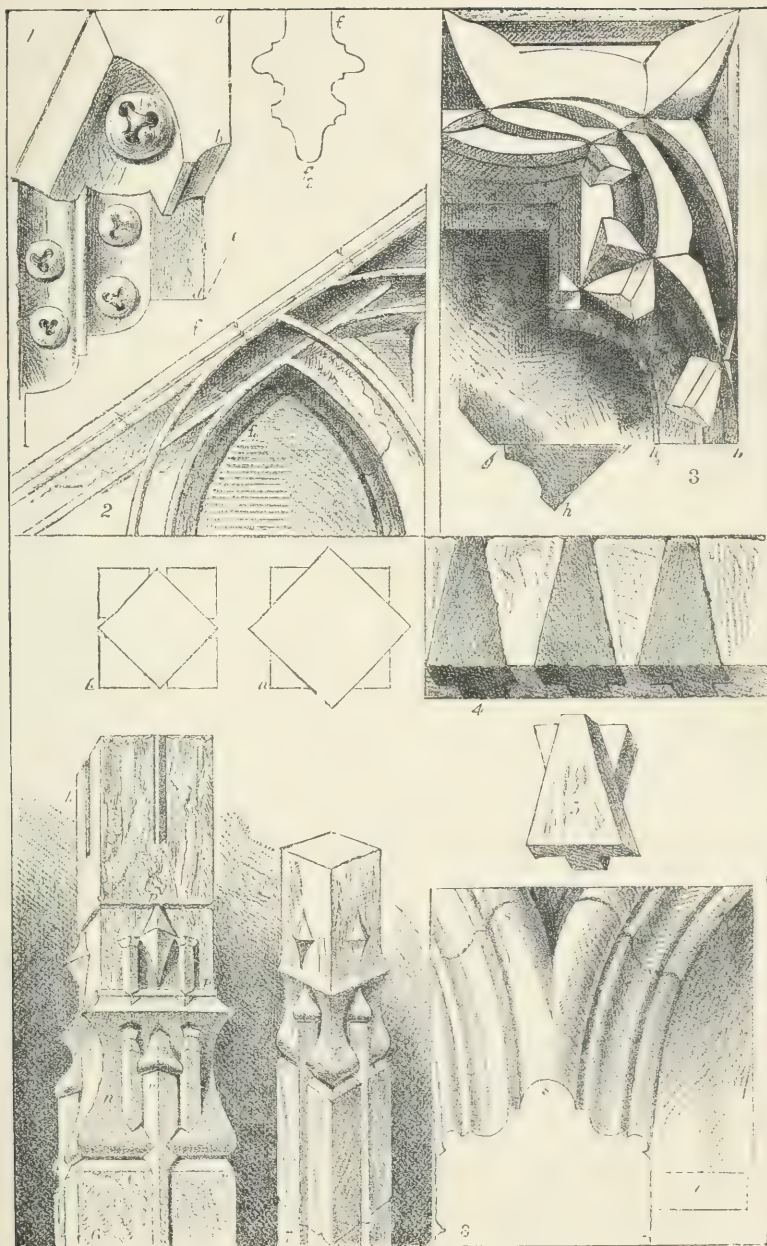
XXV. But the declining and morbid taste of the later architects, was not satisfied with thus much deception. They were delighted with the subtle charm they had created, and thought only of increasing its power. The next step was to consider and represent the tracery, as not only ductile, but penetrable; and when two mouldings met each other, to manage their intersection, so that one should appear to pass through the other, retaining its independence; or when two ran parallel to each other, to represent the one as partly contained within the other, and partly apparent above it. This form of falsity was that which crushed the art. The flexible tracteries were often beautiful, though they were ignoble; but the penetrated tracteries, rendered, as they finally were, merely the means of exhibiting the dexterity of the stone-cutter, annihilated both the beauty and dignity of the Gothic types. A system so momentous in its consequences deserves some detailed examination.

XXVI. In the drawing of the shafts of the door at Lisieux, under the spandril, in Plate VII., the reader will see the mode of managing the intersection of similar mouldings, which was universal in the great periods. They melted into each other,

and became *one* at the point of crossing, or of contact; and even the suggestion of so sharp intersection as this of Lisieux is usually avoided (this design being, of course, only a pointed form of the earlier Norman arcade, in which the arches are interlaced, and lie each over the preceding, and under the following, one, as in Anselm's tower at Canterbury), since, in the plurality of designs, when mouldings meet each other, they coincide through some considerable portion of their curves, meeting by contact, rather than by intersection; and at the point of coincidence the section of each separate moulding becomes common to the two thus melted into each other. Thus, in the junction of the circles of the window of the Palazzo Foscari, Plate VIII., given accurately in fig. 8, Plate IV., the section across the line *s*, is exactly the same as that across any break of the separated moulding above, as \bar{s} . It sometimes, however, happens, that two different mouldings meet each other. This was seldom permitted in the great periods, and, when it took place, was most awkwardly managed. Fig. 1, Plate IV. gives the junction of the mouldings of the gable and vertical, in the window of the *spire* of Salisbury. That of the gable is composed of a single, and that of the vertical of a double cavetto, decorated with ball-flowers; and the larger single moulding swallows up one of the double ones, and pushes forward among the smaller balls with the most blundering and clumsy simplicity. In comparing the sections it is to be observed that, in the upper one, the line *a b* represents an actual vertical in the plane of the window; while, in the lower one, the line *e d* represents the horizontal, in the plane of the window, indicated by the perspective line *d e*.

XXVII. The very awkwardness with which such occurrences of difficulty are met by the earlier builder, marks his dislike of the system, and unwillingness to attract the eye to such arrangements. There is another very clumsy one, in the junction of the upper and sub-arches of the triforium of Salisbury; but it is kept in the shade, and all the prominent junctions are of mouldings like each other, and managed with perfect simplicity. But so soon as the attention of the builders

Plate IV.



became, as we have just seen, fixed upon the lines of mouldings instead of the enclosed spaces, those lines began to preserve an independent existence wherever they met; and different mouldings were studiously associated, in order to obtain variety of intersectional line. We must, however, do the late builders the justice to note that, in one case, the habit grew out of a feeling of proportion, more refined than that of earlier workmen. It shows itself first in the bases of divided pillars, or arch mouldings, whose smaller shafts had originally bases formed by the continued base of the central, or other larger, columns with which they were grouped; but it being felt, when the eye of the architect became fastidious, that the dimension of moulding which was right for the base of a large shaft, was wrong for that of a small one, each shaft had an independent base; at first, those of the smaller died simply down on that of the larger; but when the vertical sections of both became complicated, the bases of the smaller shafts were considered to exist within those of the larger, and the places of their emergence, on this supposition, were calculated with the utmost nicety, and cut with singular precision; so that an elaborate late base of a divided column, as, for instance, of those in the nave of Abbeville, looks exactly as if its smaller shafts had all been finished to the ground first, each with its complete and intricate base, and then the comprehending base of the central pier had been moulded over them in clay, leaving their points and angles sticking out here and there, like the edges of sharp crystals out of a nodule of earth. The exhibition of technical dexterity in work of this kind is often marvellous, the strangest possible shapes of sections being calculated to a hair's-breadth, and the occurrence of the under and emergent forms being rendered, even in places where they are so slight that they can hardly be detected but by the touch. It is impossible to render a very elaborate example of this kind intelligible, without some fifty measured sections; but fig. 6, Plate IV. is a very interesting and simple one, from the west gate of Rouen. It is part of the base of one of the narrow piers between its principal niches. The square column *k*, having a base with the profile

$p\ r$, is supposed to contain within itself another similar one, set diagonally, and lifted so far above the inclosing one, as that the recessed part of its profile $\bar{p}\ r$ shall fall behind the projecting part of the outer one. The angle of its upper portion exactly meets the plane of the side of the upper inclosing shaft 4, and would, therefore, not be seen, unless two vertical cuts were made to exhibit it, which form two dark lines the whole way up the shaft. Two small pilasters are run, like fastening stitches, through the junction on the front of the shafts. The sections $\bar{k}\ \bar{n}$ taken respectively at the levels k, n , will explain the hypothetical construction of the whole. Fig. 7 is a base, or joint rather (for passages of this form occur again and again, on the shafts of flamboyant work), of one of the smallest piers of the pedestals which supported the lost statues of the porch; its section below would be the same as \bar{n} , and its construction, after what has been said of the other base, will be at once perceived.

XXVIII. There was, however, in this kind of involution, much to be admired as well as reprehended, the proportions of quantities were always as beautiful as they were intricate; and, though the lines of intersection were harsh, they were exquisitely opposed to the flower-work of the interposing mouldings. But the fancy did not stop here; it rose from the bases into the arches; and there, not finding room enough for its exhibition, it withdrew the capitals from the heads even of cylindrical shafts, (we cannot but admire, while we regret, the boldness of the men who could defy the authority and custom of all the nations of the earth for a space of some three thousand years,) in order that the arch mouldings might appear to emerge from the pillar, as at its base they had been lost in it, and not to terminate on the abacus of the capital; then they ran the mouldings across and through each other, at the point of the arch; and finally, not finding their natural directions enough to furnish as many occasions of intersection as they wished, bent them hither and thither, and cut off their ends short, when they had passed the point of intersection. Fig. 2, Plate IV. is part of a flying buttress from the apse of St.

Gervais at Falaise, in which the moulding whose section is rudely given above at \bar{f} , (taken vertically through the point f ;) is carried thrice through itself, in the cross-bar and two arches; and the flat fillet is cut off sharp at the end of the cross-bar, for the mere pleasure of the truncation. Fig. 3 is half of the head of a door in the Stadthaus of Sursee, in which the shaded part of the section of the joint $g g$, is that of the arch-moulding, which is three times reduplicated, and six times intersected by itself, the ends being cut off when they become unmanageable. This style is, indeed, earlier exaggerated in Switzerland and Germany, owing to the imitation in stone of the dovetailing of wood, particularly of the intersecting of beams at the angles of chalets; but it only furnishes the more plain instance of the danger of the fallacious system which, from the beginning, repressed the German, and, in the end, ruined the French Gothic. It would be too painful a task to follow further the caricatures of form, and eccentricities of treatment, which grew out of this singular abuse—the flattened arch, the shrunken pillar, the lifeless ornament, the liny moulding, the distorted and extravagant foliation, until the time came when, over these wrecks and remnants, deprived of all unity and principle, rose the foul torrent of the renaissance, and swept them all away. So fell the great dynasty of mediæval architecture. It was because it had lost its own strength, and disobeyed its own laws—because its order, and consistency, and organization, had been broken through—that it could oppose no resistance to the rush of overwhelming innovation. And this, observe, all because it had sacrificed a single truth. From that one surrender of its integrity, from that one endeavor to assume the semblance of what it was not, arose the multitudinous forms of disease and decrepitude, which rotted away the pillars of its supremacy. It was not because its time was come; it was not because it was scorned by the classical Romanist, or dreaded by the faithful Protestant. That scorn and that fear it might have survived, and lived; it would have stood forth in stern comparison with the enervated sensuality of the renaissance; it would have risen in renewed and purified honor, and with a

new soul, from the ashes into which it sank, giving up its glory, as it had received it, for the honor of God—but its own truth was gone, and it sank forever. There was no wisdom nor strength left in it, to raise it from the dust; and the error of zeal, and the softness of luxury smote it down and dissolved it away. It is good for us to remember this, as we tread upon the bare ground of its foundations, and stumble over its scattered stones. Those rent skeletons of pierced wall, through which our sea-winds moan and murmur, strewing them joint by joint, and bone by bone, along the bleak promontories on which the Pharos lights came once from houses of prayer—those grey arches and quiet isles under which the sheep of our valleys feed and rest on the turf that has buried their altars—those shapeless heaps, that are not of the Earth, which lift our fields into strange and sudden banks of flowers, and stay our mountain streams with stones that are not their own, have other thoughts to ask from us than those of mourning for the rage that despoiled, or the fear that forsook them. It was not the robber, not the fanatic, not the blasphemer, who sealed the destruction that they had wrought; the war, the wrath, the terror, might have worked their worst, and the strong walls would have risen, and the slight pillars would have started again, from under the hand of the destroyer. But they could not rise out of the ruins of their own violated truth.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAMP OF POWER.

I. IN recalling the impressions we have received from the works of man, after a lapse of time long enough to involve in obscurity all but the most vivid, it often happens that we find a strange pre-eminence and durability in many upon whose strength we had little calculated, and that points of character which had escaped the detection of the judgment, become developed under the waste of memory; as veins of harder rock, whose places could not at first have been discovered by the eye, are left salient under the action of frosts and streams. The traveller who desires to correct the errors of his judgment, necessitated by inequalities of temper, infelicities of circumstance, and accidents of association, has no other resource than to wait for the calm verdict of interposing years; and to watch for the new arrangements of eminence and shape in the images which remain latest in his memory; as in the ebbing of a mountain lake, he would watch the varying outlines of its successive shore, and trace, in the form of its departing waters, the true direction of the forces which had cleft, or the currents which had excavated, the deepest recesses of its primal bed.

In thus reverting to the memories of those works of architecture by which we have been most pleasurably impressed, it will generally happen that they fall into two broad classes: the one characterized by an exceeding preciousness and delicacy, to which we recur with a sense of affectionate admiration; and the other by a severe, and, in many cases, mysterious, majesty, which we remember with an undiminished awe, like that felt at the presence and operation of some great Spiritual Power. From about these two groups, more or less harmonised by in-

intermediate examples, but always distinctively marked by features of beauty or of power, there will be swept away, in multitudes, the memories of buildings, perhaps, in their first address to our minds, of no inferior pretension, but owing their impressiveness to characters of less enduring nobility—to value of material, accumulation of ornament, or ingenuity of mechanical construction. Especial interest may, indeed, have been awakened by such circumstances, and the memory may have been, consequently, rendered tenacious of particular parts or effects of the structure; but it will recall even these only by an active effort, and then without emotion; while in passive moments, and with thrilling influence, the image of purer beauty, and of more spiritual power, will return in a fair and solemn company; and while the pride of many a stately palace, and the wealth of many a jewelled shrine, perish from our thoughts in a dust of gold, there will rise, through their dimness, the white image of some secluded marble chapel, by river or forest side, with the fretted flower-work shrinking under its arches, as if under vaults of late-fallen snow; or the vast weariness of some shadowy wall whose separate stones are like mountain foundations, and yet numberless.

II. Now, the difference between these two orders of building is not merely that which there is in nature between things beautiful and sublime. It is, also, the difference between what is derivative and original in man's work; for whatever is in architecture fair or beautiful, is imitated from natural forms; and what is not so derived, but depends for its dignity upon arrangement and government received from human mind, becomes the expression of the power of that mind, and receives a sublimity high in proportion to the power expressed. All building, therefore, shows man either as gathering or governing; and the secrets of his success are his knowing what to gather, and how to rule. These are the two great intellectual Lamps of Architecture; the one consisting in a just and humble veneration for the works of God upon the earth, and the other in an understanding of the dominion over those works which has been vested in man.

III. Besides this expression of living authority and power, there is, however, a sympathy in the forms of noble building, with what is most sublime in natural things; and it is the governing Power directed by this sympathy, whose operation I shall at present endeavor to trace, abandoning all inquiry into the more abstract fields of invention: for this latter faculty, and the questions of proportion and arrangement connected with its discussion, can only be rightly examined in a general view of all the arts; but its sympathy, in architecture, with the vast controlling powers of Nature herself, is special, and may shortly be considered; and that with the more advantage, that it has, of late, been little felt or regarded by architects. I have seen, in recent efforts, much contest between two schools, one affecting originality, and the other legality—many attempts at beauty of design—many ingenious adaptations of construction; but I have never seen any aim at the expression of abstract power; never any appearance of a consciousness that, in this primal art of man, there is room for the marking of his relations with the mightiest, as well as the fairest, works of God; and that those works themselves have been permitted, by their Master and his, to receive an added glory from their association with earnest efforts of human thought. In the edifices of Man there should be found reverent worship and following, not only of the spirit which rounds the pillars of the forest, and arches the vault of the avenue—which gives veining to the leaf, and polish to the shell, and grace to every pulse that agitates animal organization,—but of that also which reproves the pillars of the earth, and builds up her barren precipices into the coldness of the clouds, and lifts her shadowy cones of mountain purple into the pale arch of the sky; for these, and other glories more than these, refuse not to connect themselves, in his thoughts, with the work of his own hand; the grey cliff loses not its nobleness when it reminds us of some Cyclopean waste of mural stone; the pinnacles of the rocky promontory arrange themselves, undegraded, into fantastic semblances of fortress towers; and even the awful cone of the far-off mountain has a melancholy mixed with that of its own solitude, which is cast

from the images of nameless tumuli on white sea-shores, and of the heaps of reedy clay, into which chambered cities melt in their mortality.

IV. Let us, then, see what is this power and majesty, which Nature herself does not disdain to accept from the works of man; and what that sublimity in the masses built up by his coralline-like energy, which is honorable, even when transferred by association to the dateless hills, which it needed earthquakes to lift, and deluges to mould.

And, first of mere size: It might not be thought possible to emulate the sublimity of natural objects in this respect; nor would it be, if the architect contended with them in pitched battle. It would not be well to build pyramids in the valley of Chamouni; and St. Peter's, among its many other errors, counts for not the least injurious its position on the slope of an inconsiderable hill. But imagine it placed on the plain of Marengo, or, like the Superga of Turin, or like La Salute at Venice! The fact is, that the apprehension of the size of natural objects, as well as of architecture, depends more on fortunate excitement of the imagination than on measurements by the eye; and the architect has a peculiar advantage in being able to press close upon the sight, such magnitude as he can command. There are few rocks, even among the Alps, that have a clear vertical fall as high as the choir of Beauvais; and if we secure a good precipice of wall, or a sheer and unbroken flank of tower, and place them where there are no enormous natural features to oppose them, we shall feel in them no want of sublimity of size. And it may be matter of encouragement in this respect, though one also of regret, to observe how much oftener man destroys natural sublimity, than nature crushes human power. It does not need much to humiliate a mountain. A hut will sometimes do it; I never look up to the Col de Balme from Chamouni, without a violent feeling of provocation against its hospitable little cabin, whose bright white walls form a visibly four-square spot on the green ridge, and entirely destroy all idea of its elevation. A single villa will often mar a whole landscape, and dethrone a dynasty of hills,

and the Acropolis of Athens, Parthenon and all, has, I believe, been dwarfed into a model by the palace lately built beneath it. The fact is, that hills are not so high as we fancy them, and, when to the actual impression of no mean comparative size, is added the sense of the toil of manly hand and thought, a sublimity is reached, which nothing but gross error in arrangement of its parts can destroy.

V. While, therefore, it is not to be supposed that mere size will ennoble a mean design, yet every increase of magnitude will bestow upon it a certain degree of nobleness : so that it is well to determine at first, whether the building is to be markedly beautiful or markedly sublime ; and if the latter, not to be withheld by respect to smaller parts from reaching largeness of scale ; provided only, that it be evidently in the architect's power to reach at least that degree of magnitude which is the lowest at which sublimity begins, rudely definable as that which will make a living figure look less than life beside it. It is the misfortune of most of our modern buildings that we would fain have an universal excellence in them ; and so part of the funds must go in painting, part in gilding, part in fitting up, part in painted windows, part in small steeples, part in ornaments here and there ; and neither the windows, nor the steeple, nor the ornaments, are worth their materials. For there is a crust about the impressible part of men's minds, which must be pierced through before they can be touched to the quick ; and though we may prick at it and scratch it in a thousand separate places, we might as well have let it alone if we do not come through somewhere with a deep thrust : and if we can give such a thrust anywhere, there is no need of another ; it need not be even so "wide as a church door," so that it be *enough*. And mere weight will do this ; it is a clumsy way of doing it, but an effectual one, too ; and the apathy which cannot be pierced through by a small steeple, nor shone through by a small window, can be broken through in a moment by the mere weight of a great wall. Let, therefore, the architect who has not large resources, choose his point of attack first, and, if he choose size, let him abandon decoration ; for, unless they are concen-

trated, and numerous enough to make their concentration conspicuous, all his ornaments together would not be worth one huge stone. And the choice must be a decided one, without compromise. It must be no question whether his capitals would not look better with a little carving—let him leave them huge as blocks : or whether his arches should not have richer architraves—let him throw them a foot higher, if he can ; a yard more across the nave will be worth more to him than a tessellated pavement ; and another fathom of outer wall, than an army of pinnacles. The limitation of size must be only in the uses of the building, or in the ground at his disposal.

VI. That limitation, however, being by such circumstances determined, by what means, it is to be next asked, may the actual magnitude be best displayed ; since it is seldom, perhaps never, that a building of any pretension to size looks so large as it is. The appearance of a figure in any distant, more especially in any upper, parts of it will almost always prove that we have under-estimated the magnitude of those parts.

It has often been observed that a building, in order to show its magnitude, must be seen all at once. It would, perhaps, be better to say, must be bounded as much as possible by continuous lines, and that its extreme points should be seen all at once ; or we may state, in simpler terms still, that it must have one visible bounding line from top to bottom, and from end to end. This bounding line from top to bottom may either be inclined inwards, and the mass, therefore, pyramidal ; or vertical, and the mass form one grand cliff ; or inclined outwards, as in the advancing fronts of old houses, and, in a sort, in the Greek temple, and in all buildings with heavy cornices or heads. Now, in all these cases, if the bounding line be violently broken ; if the cornice project, or the upper portion of the pyramid recede, too violently, majesty will be lost ; not because the building cannot be seen all at once,—for in the case of a heavy cornice no part of it is necessarily concealed—but because the continuity of its terminal line is broken, and the *length of that line*, therefore, cannot be estimated. But the error is, of course, more fatal when much of the building is also concealed ; as in

the well known case of the recession of the dome of St. Peter's, and, from the greater number of points of view, in churches whose highest portions, whether dome or tower, are over their cross. Thus there is only one point from which the size of the Cathedral of Florence is felt; and that is from the corner of the Via de' Balestrieri, opposite the south-east angle, where it happens that the dome is seen rising instantly above the apse and transepts. In all cases in which the tower is over the cross, the grandeur and height of the tower itself are lost, because there is but one line down which the eye can trace the whole height, and that is in the inner angle of the cross, not easily discerned. Hence, while, in symmetry and feeling, such designs may often have pre-eminence, yet, where the height of the tower itself is to be made apparent, it must be at the west end, or, better still, detached as a campanile. Imagine the loss to the Lombard churches if their campaniles were carried only to their present height over their crosses; or to the Cathedral of Rouen, if the Tour de Beurre were made central, in the place of its present debased spire!

VII. Whether, therefore, we have to do with tower or wall, there must be one bounding line from base to coping; and I am much inclined, myself, to love the true vertical, or the vertical, with a solemn frown of projection (not a scowl), as in the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence. This character is always given to rocks by the poets; with slight foundation indeed, real rocks being little given to overhanging—but with excellent judgment; for the sense of threatening conveyed by this form is a nobler character than that of mere size. And, in buildings, this threatening should be somewhat carried down into their mass. A mere projecting shelf is not enough, the whole wall must, Jupiter like, nod as well as frown. Hence, I think the propped machicolations of the Palazzo Vecchio and Duomo of Florence far grander headings than any form of Greek cornice. Sometimes the projection may be thrown lower, as in the Doge's palace of Venice, where the chief appearance of it is above the second arcade; or it may become a grand swell from the ground, as the head of a ship of the line

rises from the sea. This is very nobly attained by the projection of the niches in the third story of the Tour de Beurre at Rouen.

VIII. What is needful in the setting forth of magnitude in height, is right also in the marking it in area—let it be gathered well together. It is especially to be noted with respect to the Palazzo Vecchio and other mighty buildings of its order, how mistakenly it has been stated that dimension, in order to become impressive, should be expanded either in height or length, but not equally: whereas, rather it will be found that those buildings seem on the whole the vastest which have been gathered up into a mighty square, and which look as if they had been measured by the angel's rod, "the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal," and herein something is to be taken notice of, which I believe not to be sufficiently, if at all, considered among our architects.

Of the many broad divisions under which architecture may be considered, none appear to me more significant than that into buildings whose interest is in their walls, and those whose interest is in the lines dividing their walls. In the Greek temple the wall is as nothing; the entire interest is in the detached columns and the frieze they bear; in French Flamboyant, and in our detestable Perpendicular, the object is to get rid of the wall surface, and keep the eye altogether on tracery of line; in Romanesque work and Egyptian, the wall is a confessed and honored member, and the light is often allowed to fall on large areas of it, variously decorated. Now, both these principles are admitted by Nature, the one in her woods and thickets, the other in her plains, and cliffs, and waters; but the latter is pre-eminently the principle of power, and, in some sense, of beauty also. For, whatever infinity of fair form there may be in the maze of the forest, there is a fairer, as I think, in the surface of the quiet lake; and I hardly know that association of shaft or tracery, for which I would exchange the warin sleep of sunshine on some smooth, broad, human-like front of marble. Nevertheless, if breadth is to be beautiful, its substance must in some sort be beautiful; and we must not

hastily condemn the exclusive resting of the northern architects in divided lines, until at least we have remembered the difference between a blank surface of Caen stone, and one mixed from Genoa and Carrara, of serpentine with snow: but as regards abstract power and awfulness, there is no question; without breadth of surface it is in vain to seek them, and it matters little, so that the surface be wide, bold and unbroken, whether it be of brick or of jasper; the light of heaven upon it, and the weight of earth in it, are all we need: for it is singular how forgetful the mind may become both of material and workmanship, if only it have space enough over which to range, and to remind it, however feebly, of the joy that it has in contemplating the flatness and sweep of great plains and broad seas. And it is a noble thing for men to do this with their cut stone or moulded clay, and to make the face of a wall look infinite, and its edge against the sky like an horizon: or even if less than this be reached, it is still delightful to mark the play of passing light on its broad surface, and to see by how many artifices and gradations of tinting and shadow, time and storm will set their wild signatures upon it; and how in the rising or declining of the day the unbroken twilight rests long and luridly on its high lineless forehead, and fades away untraceably down its tiers of confused and countless stone.

IX. This, then, being, as I think, one of the peculiar elements of sublime architecture, it may be easily seen how necessarily consequent upon the love of it will be the choice of a form approaching to the square for the main outline.

For, in whatever direction the building is contracted, in that direction the eye will be drawn to its terminal lines; and the sense of surface will only be at its fullest when those lines are removed, in every direction, as far as possible. Thus the square and circle are pre-eminently the areas of power among those bounded by purely straight or curved lines; and these, with their relative solids, the cube and sphere, and relative solids of progression (as in the investigation of the laws of proportion I shall call those masses which are generated by the progression of an area of given form along a line in a given

direction), the square and cylindrical column, are the elements of utmost power in all architectural arrangements. On the other hand, grace and perfect proportion require an elongation in some one direction: and a sense of power may be communicated to this form of magnitude by a continuous series of any marked features, such as the eye may be unable to number; while yet we feel, from their boldness, decision, and simplicity, that it is indeed their multitude which has embarrassed us, not any confusion or indistinctness of form. This expedient of continued series forms the sublimity of arcades and aisles, of all ranges of columns, and, on a smaller scale, of those Greek mouldings, of which, repeated as they now are in all the meanest and most familiar forms of our furniture, it is impossible altogether to weary. Now, it is evident that the architect has choice of two types of form, each properly associated with its own kind of interest or decoration: the square, or greatest area, to be chosen especially when the *surface* is to be the subject of thought; and the elongated area, when the *divisions* of the surface are to be the subjects of thought. Both these orders of form, as I think nearly every other source of power and beauty, are marvellously united in that building which I fear to weary the reader by bringing forward too frequently, as a model of all perfection—the Doge's palace at Venice: its general arrangement, a hollow square; its principal façade, an oblong, elongated to the eye by a range of thirty-four small arches, and thirty-five columns, while it is separated by a richly canopied window in the centre, into two massive divisions, whose height and length are nearly as four to five; the arcades which give it length being confined to the lower stories, and the upper, between its broad windows, left a mighty surface of smooth marble, chequered with blocks of alternate rose-color and white. It would be impossible, I believe, to invent a more magnificent arrangement of all that is in building most dignified and most fair.

X. In the Lombard Romanesque, the two principles are more fused into each other, as most characteristically in the cathedral of Pisa: length of proportion, exhibited by an arcade

of twenty-one arches above, and fifteen below, at the side of the nave; bold square proportion in the front; that front divided into arcades, placed one above the other, the lowest with its pillars engaged, of seven arches, the four uppermost thrown out boldly from the receding wall, and casting deep shadows; the first, above the basement, of nineteen arches; the second of twenty-one; the third and fourth of eight each; sixty-three arches in all; all *circular* headed, all with cylindrical shafts, and the lowest with *square* panellings, set diagonally under their semicircles, an universal ornament in this style (Plate XII. fig. 7); the apse, a semicircle, with a semidome for its roof, and three ranges of circular arches for its exterior ornament; in the interior of the nave, a range of circular arches below a circular-arched triforium, and a vast flat *surface*, observe, of wall decorated with striped marble above; the whole arrangement (not a peculiar one, but characteristic of every church of the period; and, to my feeling, the most majestic; not perhaps the fairest, but the mightiest type of form which the mind of man has ever conceived) based exclusively on associations of the circle and the square.

I am now, however, trenching upon ground which I desire to reserve for more careful examination, in connection with other æsthetic questions: but I believe the examples I have given will justify my vindication of the square form from the reprobation which has been lightly thrown upon it; nor might this be done for it only as a ruling outline, but as occurring constantly in the best mosaics, and in a thousand forms of minor decoration, which I cannot now examine; my chief assertion of its majesty being always as it is an exponent of space and surface, and therefore to be chosen, either to rule in their outlines, or to adorn by masses of light and shade those portions of buildings in which surface is to be rendered precious or honorable.

XI. Thus far, then, of general forms, and of the modes in which the scale of architecture is best to be exhibited. Let us next consider the manifestations of power which belong to its details and lesser divisions.

The first division we have to regard, is the inevitable one of masonry. It is true that this division may, by great art, be concealed; but I think it unwise (as well as dishonest) to do so; for this reason, that there is a very noble character always to be obtained by the opposition of large stones to divided masonry, as by shafts and columns of one piece, or massy lintels and architraves, to wall work of bricks or smaller stones; and there is a certain organization in the management of such parts, like that of the continuous bones of the skeleton, opposed to the vertebræ, which it is not well to surrender. I hold, therefore, that, for this and other reasons, the masonry of a building is to be shown: and also that, with certain rare exceptions (as in the cases of chapels and shrines of most finished workmanship), the smaller the building, the more necessary it is that its masonry should be bold, and *vice versâ*. For if a building be under the mark of average magnitude, it is not in our power to increase its apparent size (too easily measurable) by any proportionate diminution in the scale of its masonry. But it may be often in our power to give it a certain nobility by building it of massy stones, or, at all events, introducing such into its make. Thus it is impossible that there should ever be majesty in a cottage built of brick; but there is a marked element of sublimity in the rude and irregular piling of the rocky walls of the mountain cottages of Wales, Cumberland, and Scotland. Their size is not one whit diminished, though four or five stones reach at their angles from the ground to the eaves, or though a native rock happen to project conveniently, and to be built into the framework of the wall. On the other hand, after a building has once reached the mark of majestic size, it matters, indeed, comparatively little whether its masonry be large or small, but if it be altogether large, it will sometimes diminish the magnitude for want of a measure; if altogether small, it will suggest ideas of poverty in material, or deficiency in mechanical resource, besides interfering in many cases with the lines of the design, and delicacy of the workmanship. A very unhappy instance of such interference exists in the façade of the church of St. Madeleine at Paris,

where the columns, being built of very small stones of nearly equal size, with visible joints, look as if they were covered with a close trellis. So, then, that masonry will be generally the most magnificent which, without the use of materials systematically small or large, accommodates itself, naturally and frankly, to the conditions and structure of its work, and displays alike its power of dealing with the vastest masses, and of accomplishing its purpose with the smallest, sometimes heaping rock upon rock with Titanic commandment, and anon binding the dusty remnants and edgy splinters into springing vaults and swelling domes. And if the nobility of this confessed and natural masonry were more commonly felt, we should not lose the dignity of it by smoothing surfaces and fitting joints. The sums which we waste in chiselling and polishing stones which would have been better left as they came from the quarry would often raise a building a story higher. Only in this there is to be a certain respect for material also: for if we build in marble, or in any limestone, the known ease of the workmanship will make its absence seem slovenly; it will be well to take advantage of the stone's softness, and to make the design delicate and dependent upon smoothness of chiselled surfaces: but if we build in granite or lava, it is a folly, in most cases, to cast away the labor necessary to smooth it; it is wiser to make the design granitic itself, and to leave the blocks rudely squared. I do not deny a certain splendor and sense of power in the smoothing of granite, and in the entire subduing of its iron resistance to the human supremacy. But, in most cases, I believe, the labor and time necessary to do this would be better spent in another way; and that to raise a building to a height of a hundred feet with rough blocks, is better than to raise it to seventy with smooth ones. There is also a magnificence in the natural cleavage of the stone to which the art must indeed be great that pretends to be equivalent; and a stern expression of brotherhood with the mountain heart from which it has been rent, ill-exchanged for a glistering obedience to the rule and measure of men. His eye must be delicate indeed, who would desire to see the Pitti palace polished.

XII. Next to those of the masonry, we have to consider the divisions of the design itself. Those divisions are, necessarily, either into masses of light and shade, or else by traced lines; which latter must be, indeed, themselves produced by incisions or projections which, in some lights, cast a certain breadth of shade, but which may, nevertheless, if finely enough cut, be always true lines, in distant effect. I call, for instance, such panelling as that of Henry the Seventh's chapel, pure linear division.

Now, it does not seem to me sufficiently recollected, that a wall surface is to an architect simply what a white canvas is to a painter, with this only difference, that the wall has already a sublimity in its height, substance, and other characters already considered, on which it is more dangerous to break than to touch with shade the canvas surface. And, for my own part, I think a smooth, broad, freshly laid surface of gesso a fairer thing than most pictures I see painted on it; much more, a noble surface of stone than most architectural features which it is caused to assume. But however this may be, the canvas and wall are supposed to be given, and it is our craft to divide them.

And the principles on which this division is to be made, are as regards relation of quantities, the same in architecture as in painting, or indeed, in any other art whatsoever, only the painter is by his varied subject partly permitted, partly compelled, to dispense with the symmetry of architectural light and shade, and to adopt arrangements apparently free and accidental. So that in modes of grouping there is much difference (though no opposition) between the two arts; but in rules of quantity, both are alike, so far forth as their commands of means are alike. For the architect, not being able to secure always the same depth or decision of shadow, nor to add to its sadness by color (because even when color is employed, it cannot follow the moving shade), is compelled to make many allowances, and avail himself of many contrivances, which the painter needs neither consider nor employ.

XIII. Of these limitations the first consequence is, that

positive shade is a more necessary and more sublime thing in an architect's hands than in a painter's. For the latter being able to temper his light with an under tone throughout, and to make it delightful with sweet color, or awful with lurid color, and to represent distance, and air, and sun, by the depth of it, and fill its whole space with expression, can deal with an enormous, nay, almost with an universal extent of it, and the best painters most delight in such extent; but as light, with the architect, is nearly always liable to become full and untempered sunshine seen upon solid surface, his only rests, and his chief means of sublimity, are definite shades. So that, after size and weight, the Power of architecture may be said to depend on the quantity (whether measured in space or intenseness) of its shadow; and it seems to me, that the reality of its works, and the use and influence they have in the daily life of men (as opposed to those works of art with which we have nothing to do but in times of rest or of pleasure) require of it that it should express a kind of human sympathy, by a measure of darkness as great as there is in human life; and that as the great poem and great fiction generally affect us most by the majesty of their masses of shade, and cannot take hold upon us if they affect a continuance of lyric sprightliness, but must be serious often, and sometimes melancholy, else they do not express the truth of this wild world of ours; so there must be, in this magnificently human art of architecture, some equivalent expression for the trouble and wrath of life, for its sorrow and its mystery; and this it can only give by depth or diffusion of gloom, by the frown upon its front, and the shadow of its recess. So that Rembrandtism is a noble manner in architecture, though a false one in painting; and I do not believe that ever any building was truly great, unless it had mighty masses, vigorous and deep, of shadow mingled with its surface. And among the first habits that a young architect should learn, is that of thinking in shadow, not looking at a design in its miserable liny skeleton; but conceiving it as it will be when the dawn lights it, and the dusk leaves it; when its stones will be hot and its crannies cool; when the lizards will bask on the one, and the birds build in

the other. Let him design with the sense of cold and heat upon him ; let him cut out the shadows, as men dig wells in unwatered plains ; and lead along the lights, as a founder does his hot metal ; let him keep the full command of both, and see that he knows how they fall, and where they fade. His paper lines and proportions are of no value : all that he has to do must be done by spaces of light and darkness ; and his business is to see that the one is broad and bold enough not to be swallowed up by twilight, and the other deep enough not to be dried like a shallow pool by a noon-day sun.

And that this may be, the first necessity is that the quantities of shade or light, whatever they may be, shall be thrown into masses, either of something like equal weight, or else large masses of the one relieved with small of the other ; but masses of one or other kind there must be. No design that is divided at all, and is not divided into masses, can ever be of the smallest value : this great law respecting breadth, precisely the same in architecture and painting, is so important, that the examination of its two principal applications will include most of the conditions of majestic design on which I would at present insist.

XIV. Painters are in the habit of speaking loosely of masses of light and shade, meaning thereby any large spaces of either. Nevertheless, it is convenient sometimes to restrict the term "mass" to the portions to which proper form belongs, and to call the field on which such forms are traced, interval. Thus, in foliage with projecting boughs or stems, we have masses of light, with intervals of shade ; and, in light skies with dark clouds upon them, masses of shade, with intervals of light.

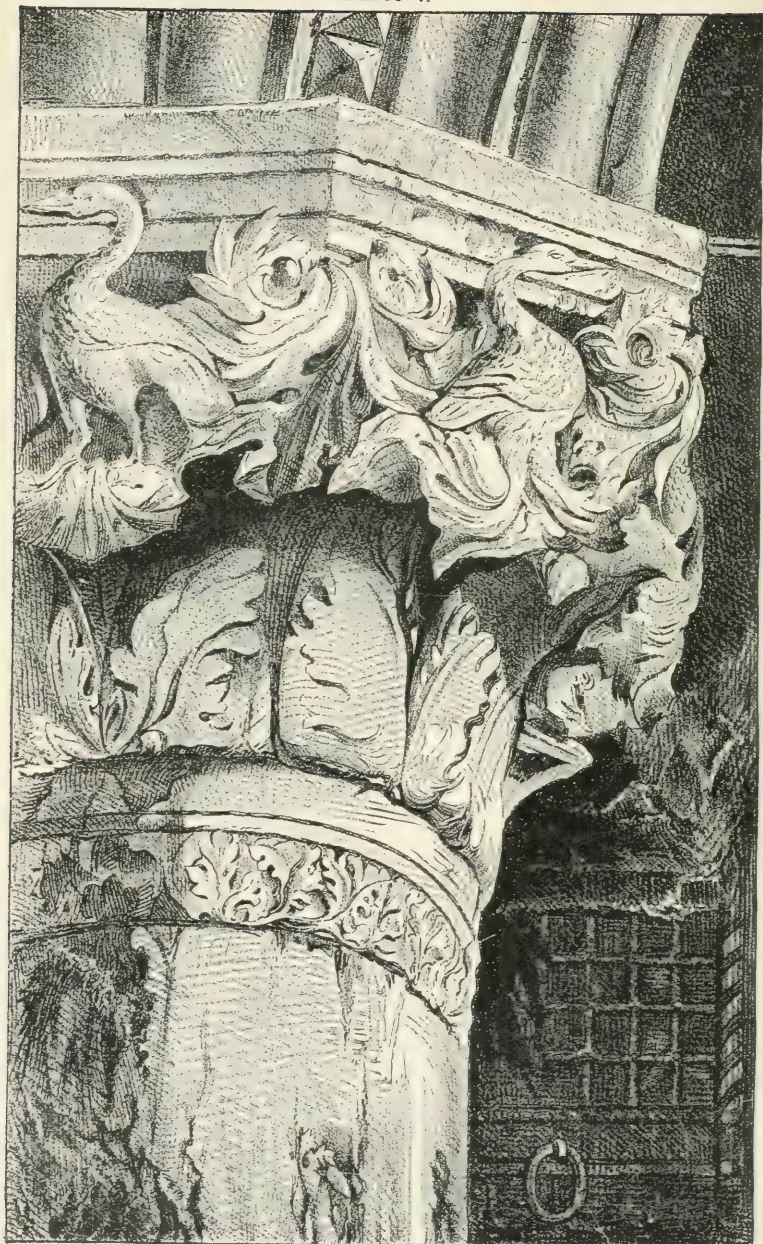
This distinction is, in architecture, still more necessary ; for there are two marked styles dependent upon it : one in which the forms are drawn with light upon darkness, as in Greek sculpture and pillars ; the other in which they are drawn with darkness upon light, as in early Gothic foliation. Now, it is not in the designer's power determinately to vary degrees and places of darkness, but it is altogether in his power to vary in determined directions his degrees of light. Hence, the use of the dark mass characterises, generally, a trenchant style of design,

in which the darks and lights are both flat, and terminated by sharp edges; while the use of the light mass is in the same way associated with a softened and full manner of design, in which the darks are much warmed by reflected lights, and the lights are rounded and melt into them. The term applied by Milton to Doric bas-relief—"bossy," is, as is generally the case with Milton's epithets, the most comprehensive and expressive of this manner, which the English language contains; while the term which specifically describes the chief member of early Gothic decoration, *feuille*, foil or leaf, is equally significative of a flat space of shade.

XV. We shall shortly consider the actual modes in which these two kinds of mass have been treated. And, first, of the light, or rounded, mass. The modes in which relief was secured for the more projecting forms of bas-relief, by the Greeks, have been too well described by Mr. Eastlake * to need recapitulation; the conclusion which forces itself upon us from the facts he has remarked, being one on which I shall have occasion farther to insist presently, that the Greek workman cared for shadow only as a dark field wherefrom his light figure or design might be intelligibly detached: his attention was concentrated on the one aim at readableness, and clearness of accent; and all composition, all harmony, nay, the very vitality and energy of separate groups were, when necessary, sacrificed to plain speaking. Nor was there any predilection for one kind of form rather than another. Rounded forms were, in the columns and principal decorative members, adopted, not for their own sake, but as characteristic of the things represented. They were beautifully rounded, because the Greek habitually did well what he had to do, not because he loved roundness more than squareness; severely rectilinear forms were associated with the curved ones in the cornice and triglyph, and the mass of the pillar was divided by a fluting, which, in distant effect, destroyed much of its breadth. What power of light these primal arrangements left, was diminished in successive refinements and additions of ornament; and continued to diminish

* Literature of the Fine Arts.—Essay on Bas-relief.

through Roman work, until the confirmation of the circular arch as a decorative feature. Its lovely and simple line taught the eye to ask for a similar boundary of solid form; the dome followed, and necessarily the decorative masses were thenceforward managed with reference to, and in sympathy with, the chief feature of the building. Hence arose, among the Byzantine architects, a system of ornament, entirely restrained within the superficies of curvilinear masses, on which the light fell with as unbroken gradation as on a dome or column, while the illumined surface was nevertheless cut into details of singular and most ingenious intricacy. Something is, of course, to be allowed for the less dexterity of the workmen; it being easier to cut down into a solid block, than to arrange the projecting portions of leaf on the Greek capital: such leafy capitals are nevertheless executed by the Byzantines with skill enough to show that their preference of the massive form was by no means compulsory, nor can I think it unwise. On the contrary, while the arrangements of *line* are far more artful in the Greek capital, the Byzantine light and shade are as incontestably more grand and masculine, based on that quality of pure gradation, which nearly all natural objects possess, and the attainment of which is, in fact, the first and most palpable purpose in natural arrangements of grand form. The rolling heap of the thunder-cloud, divided by rents, and multiplied by wreaths, yet gathering them all into its broad, torrid, and towering zone, and its midnight darkness opposite; the scarcely less majestic heave of the mountain side, all torn and traversed by depth of defile and ridge of rock, yet never losing the unity of its illumined swell and shadowy decline; and the head of every mighty tree, rich with tracery of leaf and bough, yet terminated against the sky by a true line, and rounded by a green horizon, which, multiplied in the distant forest, makes it look bossy from above; all these mark, for a great and honored law, that diffusion of light for which the Byzantine ornaments were designed; and show us that those builders had truer sympathy with what God made majestic, than the self-contemplating and self-contented Greek. I know that they are barbaric in



comparison ; but there is a power in their barbarism of sterner tone, a power not sophistic nor penetrative, but embracing and mysterious ; a power faithful more than thoughtful, which conceived and felt more than it created ; a power that neither comprehended nor ruled itself, but worked and wandered as it listed, like mountain streams and winds ; and which could not rest in the expression or seizure of finite form. It could not bury itself in acanthus leaves. Its imagery was taken from the shadows of the storms and hills, and had fellowship with the night and day of the earth itself.

XVI. I have endeavored to give some idea of one of the hollow balls of stone which, surrounded by flowing leafage, occur in varied succession on the architrave of the central gate of St. Mark's at Venice, in Plate I. fig. 2. It seems to me singularly beautiful in its unity of lightness, and delicacy of detail, with breadth of light. It looks as if its leaves had been sensitive, and had risen and shut themselves into a bud at some sudden touch, and would presently fall back again into their wild flow. The cornices of San Michele of Lucca, seen above and below the arch, in Plate VI., show the effect of heavy leafage and thick stems arranged on a surface whose curve is a simple quadrant, the light dying from off them as it turns. It would be difficult, as I think, to invent anything more noble ; and I insist on the broad character of their arrangement the more earnestly, because, afterwards modified by greater skill in its management, it became characteristic of the richest pieces of Gothic design. The capital, given in Plate V., is of the noblest period of the Venetian Gothic ; and it is interesting to see the play of leafage so luxuriant, absolutely subordinated to the breadth of two masses of light and shade. What is done by the Venetian architect, with a power as irresistible as that of the waves of his surrounding sea, is done by the masters of the Cis-Alpine Gothic, more timidly, and with a manner somewhat cramped and cold, but not less expressing their assent to the same great law. The ice spiculæ of the North, and its broken sunshine, seem to have image in, and influence on the work ; and the leaves which, under the Ital-

ian's hand, roll, and flow, and bow down over their black shadows, as in the weariness of noon-day heat, are, in the North, crisped and frost-bitten, wrinkled on the edges, and sparkling as if with dew. But the rounding of the ruling form is not less sought and felt. In the lower part of Plate I. is the finial of the pediment given in Plate II., from the cathedral of St. Lo. It is exactly similar in feeling to the Byzantine capital, being rounded under the abacus by four branches of thistle leaves, whose stems, springing from the angles, bend outwards and fall back to the head, throwing their jaggy spines down upon the full light, forming two sharp quatrefoils. I could not get near enough to this finial to see with what degree of delicacy the spines were cut; but I have sketched a natural group of thistle-leaves beside it, that the reader may compare the types, and see with what mastery they are subjected to the broad form of the whole. The small capital from Coutances, Plate XIII. fig. 4, which is of earlier date, is of simpler elements, and exhibits the principle still more clearly; but the St. Lo finial is only one of a thousand instances which might be gathered even from the fully developed flamboyant, the feeling of breadth being retained in minor ornaments long after it had been lost in the main design, and sometimes capriciously renewing itself throughout, as in the cylindrical niches and pedestals which enrich the porches of Caudebec and Rouen. Fig. 1, Plate I. is the simplest of those of Rouen; in the more elaborate there are four projecting sides, divided by buttresses into eight rounded compartments of tracery; even the whole bulk of the outer pier is treated with the same feeling; and though composed partly of concave recesses, partly of square shafts, partly of statues and tabernacle work, arranges itself as a whole into one richly rounded tower.

XVII. I cannot here enter into the curious questions connected with the management of larger curved surfaces; into the causes of the difference in proportion necessary to be observed between round and square towers; nor into the reasons why a column or ball may be richly ornamented, while surface

decorations would be inexpedient on masses like the Castle of St. Angelo, the tomb of Cecilia Metella, or the dome of St. Peter's. But what has been above said of the desirableness of serenity in plane surfaces, applies still more forcibly to those which are curved ; and it is to be remembered that we are, at present, considering how this serenity and power may be carried into minor divisions, not how the ornamental character of the lower form may, upon occasion, be permitted to fret the calmness of the higher. Nor, though the instances we have examined are of globular or cylindrical masses chiefly, is it to be thought that breadth can only be secured by such alone : many of the noblest forms are of subdued curvature, sometimes hardly visible ; but curvature of some degree there must be, in order to secure any measure of grandeur in a small mass of light. One of the most marked distinctions between one artist and another, in the point of skill, will be found in their relative delicacy of perception of rounded surface ; the full power of expressing the perspective, foreshortening and various undulation of such surface is, perhaps, the last and most difficult attainment of the hand and eye. For instance : there is, perhaps, no tree which has baffled the landscape painter more than the common black spruce fir. It is rare that we see any representation of it other than caricature. It is conceived as if it grew in one plane, or as a section of a tree, with a set of boughs symmetrically dependent on opposite sides. It is thought formal, unmanageable, and ugly. It would be so, if it grew as it is drawn. But the power of the tree is not in that chandelier-like section. It is in the dark, flat, solid tables of leafage, which it holds out on its strong arms, curved slightly over them like shields, and spreading towards the extremity like a hand. It is vain to endeavor to paint the sharp, grassy, intricate leafage, until this ruling form has been secured ; and in the boughs that approach the spectator, the foreshortening of it is like that of a wide hill country, ridge just rising over ridge in successive distances ; and the finger-like extremities, foreshortened to absolute bluntness, require a delicacy in the rendering of them like that of the drawing of

the band of the Magdalene upon the vase in Mr. Rogers's *Titian*. Get but the back of that foliage, and you have the tree; but I cannot name the artist who has thoroughly felt it. So, in all drawing and sculpture, it is the power of rounding, softly and perfectly, every inferior mass which preserves the serenity, as it follows the truth, of Nature, and which demands the highest knowledge and skill from the workman. A noble design may always be told by the back of a single leaf, and it was the sacrifice of this breath and refinement of surface for sharp edges and extravagant undercutting, which destroyed the Gothic mouldings, as the substitution of the line for the light destroyed the Gothic tracery. This change, however, we shall better comprehend after we have glanced at the chief conditions of arrangement of the second kind of mass; that which is flat, and of shadow only.

XVIII. We have noted above how the wall surface, composed of rich materials, and covered with costly work, in modes which we shall examine in the next Chapter, became a subject of peculiar interest to the Christian architects. Its broad flat lights could only be made valuable by points or masses of energetic shadow, which were obtained by the Romanesque architect by means of ranges of recessed arcade, in the management of which, however, though all the effect depends upon the shadow so obtained, the eye is still, as in classical architecture, caused to dwell upon the projecting columns, capitals, and wall, as in Plate VI. But with the enlargement of the window, which, in the Lombard and Romanesque churches, is usually little more than an arched slit, came the conception of the simpler mode of decoration, by penetrations which, seen from within, are forms of light, and, from without, are forms of shade. In Italian traceries the eye is exclusively fixed upon the dark forms of the penetrations, and the whole proportion and power of the design are caused to depend upon them. The intermediate spaces are, indeed, in the most perfect early examples, filled with elaborate ornament; but this ornament was so subdued as never to disturb the simplicity and force of the dark masses; and in many instances is en-

Plate VI.



tirely wanting. The composition of the whole depends on the proportioning and shaping of the darks ; and it is impossible that anything can be more exquisite than their placing in the head window of the Giotto campanile, Plate IX., or the church of Or San Michele. So entirely does the effect depend upon them, that it is quite useless to draw Italian tracery in outline ; if with any intention of rendering its effect, it is better to mark the black spots, and let the rest alone. Of course, when it is desired to obtain an accurate rendering of the design, its lines and mouldings are enough ; but it often happens that works on architecture are of little use, because they afford the reader no means of judging of the effective intention of the arrangements which they state. No person, looking at an architectural drawing of the richly foliated cusps and intervals of Or San Michele, would understand that all this sculpture was extraneous, was a mere added grace, and had nothing to do with the real anatomy of the work, and that by a few bold cuttings through a slab of stone he might reach the main effect of it all at once. I have, therefore, in the plate of the design of Giotto, endeavored especially to mark these points of *purpose* ; there, as in every other instance, black shadows of a graceful form lying on the white surface of the stone, like dark leaves laid upon snow. Hence, as before observed, the universal name of foil applied to such ornaments.

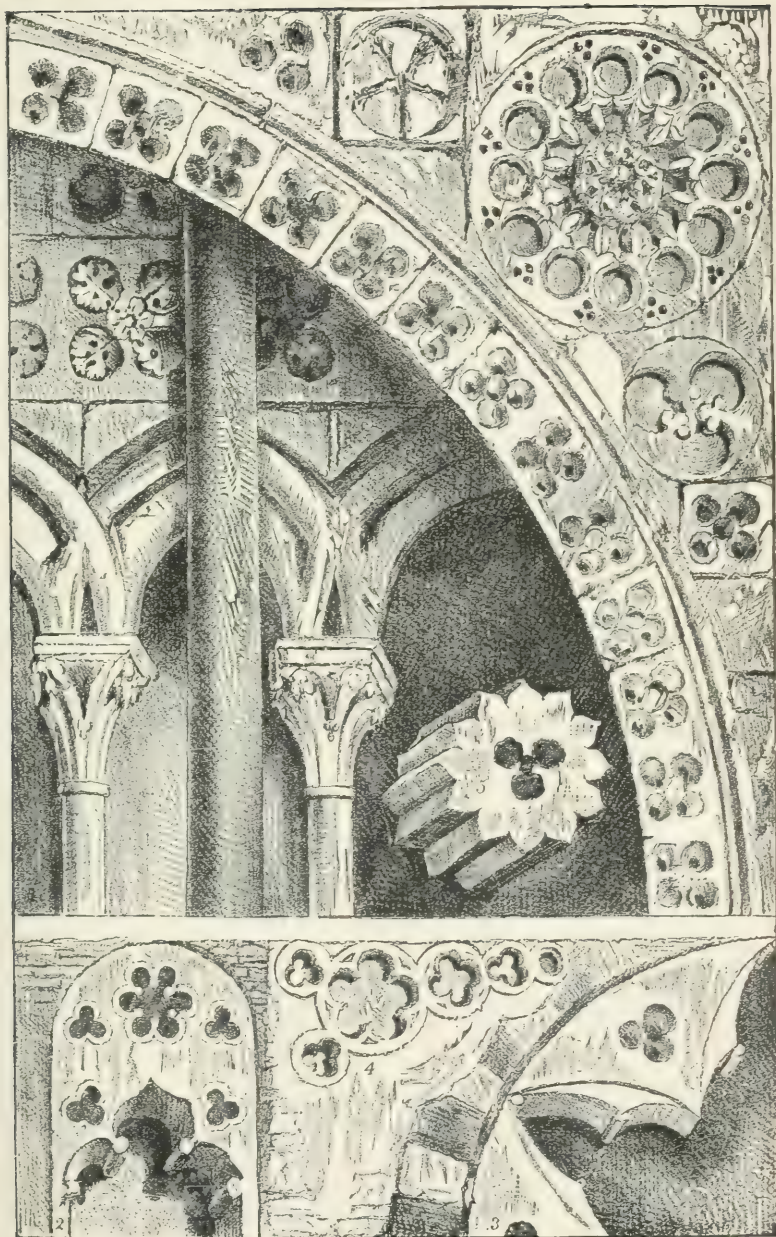
XIX. In order to the obtaining their full effect, it is evident that much caution is necessary in the management of the glass. In the finest instances, the traceries are open lights, either in towers, as in this design of Giotto's, or in external arcades like that of the Campo Santo at Pisa or the Doge's palace at Venice ; and it is thus only that their full beauty is shown. In domestic buildings, or in windows of churches necessarily glazed, the glass was usually withdrawn entirely behind the traceries. Those of the Cathedral of Florence stand quite clear of it, casting their shadows in well detached lines, so as in most lights to give the appearance of a double tracery. In those few instances in which the glass was set in the tracery itself, as in Or San Michele, the effect of the latter is half destroyed :

perhaps the especial attention paid by Orgagna to his surface ornament, was connected with the intention of so glazing them. It is singular to see, in late architecture, the glass, which tormented the bolder architects, considered as a valuable means of making the lines of tracery more slender; as in the smallest intervals of the windows of Merton College, Oxford, where the glass is advanced about two inches from the centre of the tracery bar (that in the larger spaces being in the middle, as usual), in order to prevent the depth of shadow from farther diminishing the apparent interval. Much of the lightness of the effect of the traceries is owing to this seemingly unimportant arrangement. But, generally speaking, glass spoils all traceries; and it is much to be wished that it should be kept well within them, when it cannot be dispensed with, and that the most careful and beautiful designs should be reserved for situations where no glass would be needed.

XX. The method of decoration by shadow was, as far as we have hitherto traced it, common to the northern and southern Gothic. But in the carrying out of the system they instantly diverged. Having marble at his command, and classical decoration in his sight, the southern architect was able to carve the intermediate spaces with exquisite leafage, or to vary his wall surface with inlaid stones. The northern architect neither knew the ancient work, nor possessed the delicate material; and he had no resource but to cover his walls with holes, cut into foiled shapes like those of the windows. This he did, often with great clumsiness, but always with a vigorous sense of composition, and always, observe, depending on the *shadows* for effect. Where the wall was thick and could not be cut through, and the foilings were large, those shadows did not fill the entire space; but the form was, nevertheless, drawn on the eye by means of them, and when it was possible, they were cut clear through, as in raised screens of pediment, like those on the west front of Bayeux: cut so deep in every case, as to secure, in all but a direct low front light, great breadth of shadow.

The spandril, given at the top of Plate VII., is from the

Plate VII.



south-western entrance of the Cathedral of Lisieux; one of the most quaint and interesting doors in Normandy, probably soon to be lost for ever, by the continuance of the masonic operations which have already destroyed the northern tower. Its work is altogether rude, but full of spirit; the opposite spandrils have different, though balanced, ornaments very inaccurately adjusted, each rosette or star (as the five-rayed figure, now quite defaced, in the upper portion appears to have been) cut on its own block of stone and fitted in with small nicety, especially illustrating the point I have above insisted upon—the architect's utter neglect of the forms of intermediate stone, at this early period.

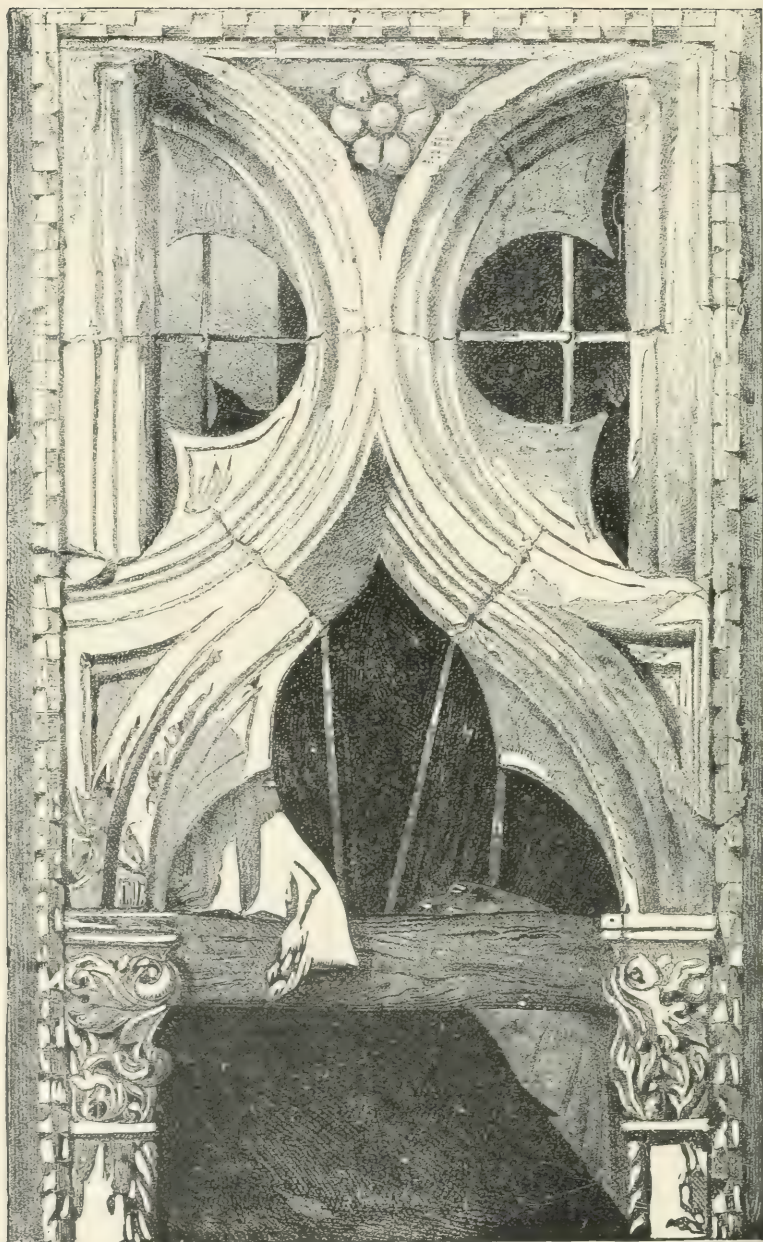
The arcade, of which a single arch and shaft are given on the left, forms the flank of the door; three outer shafts bearing three orders within the spandril which I have drawn, and each of these shafts carried over an inner arcade, decorated above with quatre-foils, cut concave and filled with leaves, the whole disposition exquisitely picturesque and full of strange play of light and shade.

For some time the penetrative ornaments, if so they may be for convenience called, maintained their bold and independent character. Then they multiplied and enlarged, becoming shallower as they did so; then they began to run together, one swallowing up, or hanging on to, another, like bubbles in expiring foam—fig. 4, from a spandril at Bayeux, looks as if it had been blown from a pipe; finally, they lost their individual character altogether, and the eye was made to rest on the separating lines of tracery, as we saw before in the window; and then came the great change and the fall of the Gothic power.

XXI. Figs. 2 and 3, the one a quadrant of the star window of the little chapel close to St. Anastasia at Verona, and the other a very singular example from the church of the Eremitani at Padua, compared with fig. 5, one of the ornaments of the transept towers of Rouen, show the closely correspondent conditions of the early Northern and Southern Gothic.¹⁰ But, as we have said, the Italian architects, not being embarrassed for decoration of wall surface, and not being obliged, like the

Northmen, to multiply their penetrations, held to the system for some time longer ; and while they increased the refinement of the ornament, kept the purity of the plan. That refinement of ornament was their weak point, however, and opened the way for the renaissance attack. They fell, like the old Romans, by their luxury, except in the separate instance of the magnificent school of Venice. That architecture began with the luxuriance in which all others expired : it founded itself on the Byzantine mosaic and fretwork ; and laying aside its ornaments, one by one, while it fixed its forms by laws more and more severe, stood forth, at last, a model of domestic Gothic, so grand, so complete, so nobly systematised, that, to my mind, there never existed an architecture with so stern a claim to our reverence. I do not except even the Greek Doric ; the Doric had cast nothing away ; the fourteenth century Venetian had cast away, one by one, for a succession of centuries, every splendor that art and wealth could give it. It had laid down its crown and its jewels, its gold and its color, like a king disrobing ; it had resigned its exertion, like an athlete reposing ; once capricious and fantastic, it had bound itself by laws inviolable and serene as those of nature herself. It retained nothing but its beauty and its power ; both the highest, but both restrained. The Doric flutings were of irregular number—the Venetian mouldings were unchangeable. The Doric manner of ornament admitted no temptation, it was the fasting of an anchorite—the Venetian ornament embraced, while it governed, all vegetable and animal forms ; it was the temperance of a man, the command of Adam over creation. I do not know so magnificent a marking of human authority as the iron grasp of the Venetian over his own exuberance of imagination ; the calm and solemn restraint with which, his mind filled with thoughts of flowing leafage and fiery life, he gives those thoughts expression for an instant, and then withdraws within those massy bars and levelled cusps of stone."

And his power to do this depended altogether on his retaining the forms of the shadows in his sight. Far from carrying the eye to the ornaments, upon the stone, he abandoned



these latter one by one ; and while his mouldings received the most shapely order and symmetry, closely correspondent with that of the Rouen tracery, compare Plates III. and VIII., he kept the cusps within them perfectly flat, decorated, if at all, with a trefoil (Palazzo Foscari), or fillet (Doge's Palace) just traceable and no more, so that the quatrefoil, cut as sharply through them as if it had been struck out by a stamp, told upon the eye, with all its four black leaves, miles away. No knots of flowerwork, no ornaments of any kind, were suffered to interfere with the purity of its form : the cusp is usually quite sharp ; but slightly truncated in the Palazzo Foscari, and charged with a simple ball in that of the Doge ; and the glass of the window, where there was any, was, as we have seen, thrown back behind the stone-work, that no flashes of light might interfere with its depth. Corrupted forms, like those of the Casa d'Oro and Palazzo Pisani, and several others, only serve to show the majesty of the common design.

XXII. Such are the principal circumstances traceable in the treatment of the two kinds of masses of light and darkness, in the hands of the earlier architects ; gradation in the one, flatness in the other, and breadth in both, being the qualities sought and exhibited by every possible expedient, up to the period when, as we have before stated, the line was substituted for the mass, as the means of division of surface. Enough has been said to illustrate this, as regards tracery ; but a word or two is still necessary respecting the mouldings.

Those of the earlier times were, in the plurality of instances, composed of alternate square and cylindrical shafts, variously associated and proportioned. Where concave cuttings occur, as in the beautiful west doors of Bayeux, they are between cylindrical shafts, which they throw out into broad light. The eye in all cases dwells on broad surfaces, and commonly upon few. In course of time, a low ridgy process is seen emerging along the outer edge of the cylindrical shaft, forming a line of light upon it and destroying its gradation. Hardly traceable at first (as on the alternate rolls of the north door of Rouen), it grows and pushes out as gradually as a stag's horns : sharp at

first on the edge; but, becoming prominent, it receives a truncation, and becomes a definite fillet on the face of the roll. Not yet to be checked, it pushes forward until the roll itself becomes subordinate to it, and is finally lost in a slight swell upon its sides, while the concavities have all the time been deepening and enlarging behind it, until, from a succession of square or cylindrical masses, the whole moulding has become a series of *concavities* edged by delicate fillets, upon which (sharp *lines* of light, observe) the eye exclusively rests. While this has been taking place, a similar, though less total, change has affected the flowerwork itself. In Plate I. fig. 2 (*a*), I have given two from the transepts of Rouen. It will be observed how absolutely the eye rests on the forms of the leaves, and on the three berries in the angle, being in light exactly what the trefoil is in darkness. These mouldings nearly adhere to the stone; and are very slightly, though sharply, undercut. In process of time, the attention of the architect, instead of resting on the leaves, went to the *stalks*. These latter were elongated (*b*, from the south door of St. Lo); and to exhibit them better, the deep concavity was cut behind, so as to throw them out in lines of light. The system was carried out into continually increasing intricacy, until, in the transepts of Beauvais, we have brackets and flamboyant traceries, composed of twigs without any leaves at all. This, however, is a partial, though a sufficiently characteristic, caprice, the leaf being never generally banished, and in the mouldings round those same doors, beautifully managed, but itself rendered liny by bold marking of its ribs and veins, and by turning up, and crisping its edges, large intermediate spaces being always left to be occupied by intertwining stems (*c*, from Caudebec). The trefoil of light formed by berries or acorns, though diminished in value, was never lost up to the last period of living Gothic.

XXIII. It is interesting to follow into its many ramifications, the influence of the corrupting principle; but we have seen enough of it to enable us to draw our practical conclusion—a conclusion a thousand times felt and reiterated in the experience and advice of every practised artist, but never often

enough repeated, never profoundly enough felt. Of composition and invention much has been written, it seems to me vainly, for men cannot be taught to compose or to invent; of these, the highest elements of Power in architecture, I do not, therefore, speak; nor, here, of that peculiar restraint in the imitation of natural forms, which constitutes the dignity of even the most luxuriant work of the great periods. Of this restraint I shall say a word or two in the next Chapter; pressing now only the conclusion, as practically useful as it is certain, that the relative majesty of buildings depends more on the weight and vigor of their masses than on any other attribute of their design: mass of everything, of bulk, of light, of darkness, of color, not mere sum of any of these, but breadth of them; not broken light, nor scattered darkness, nor divided weight, but solid stone, broad sunshine, starless shade. Time would fail me altogether, if I attempted to follow out the range of the principle; there is not a feature, however apparently trifling, to which it cannot give power. The wooden fillings of belfry lights, necessary to protect their interiors from rain, are in England usually divided into a number of neatly executed cross-bars, like those of Venetian blinds, which, of course, become as conspicuous in their sharpness as they are uninteresting in their precise carpentry, multiplying, moreover, the horizontal lines which directly contradict those of the architecture. Abroad, such necessities are met by three or four downright penthouse roofs, reaching each from within the window to the outside shafts of its mouldings; instead of the horrible row of ruled lines, the space is thus divided into four or five grand masses of shadow, with grey slopes of roof above, bent or yielding into all kinds of delicious swells and curves, and covered with warm tones of moss and lichen. Very often the thing is more delightful than the stone-work itself, and all because it is broad, dark, and simple. It matters not how clumsy, how common, the means are, that get weight and shadow—sloping roof, jutting porch, projecting balcony, hollow niche, massy gargoyle, frowning parapet; get but gloom and simplicity, and all good things will follow in their place

and time; do but design with the owl's eyes first, and you will gain the falcon's afterwards.

XXIV. I am grieved to have to insist upon what seems so simple: it looks trite and commonplace when it is written, but pardon me this: for it is anything but an accepted or understood principle in practice, and the less excusably forgotten, because it is, of all the great and true laws of art, the easiest to obey. The executive facility of complying with its demands cannot be too earnestly, too frankly asserted. There are not five men in the kingdom who could compose, not twenty who could cut, the foliage with which the windows of Or San Michele are adorned; but there is many a village clergyman who could invent and dispose its black openings, and not a village mason who could not cut them. Lay a few clover or wood-roof leaves on white paper, and a little alteration in their positions will suggest figures which, cut boldly through a slab of marble, would be worth more window traceries than an architect could draw in a summer's day. There are few men in the world who could design a Greek capital; there are few who could not produce some vigor of effect with leaf designs on Byzantine block: few who could design a Palladian front, or a flamboyant pediment; many who could build a square mass like the Strozzi palace. But I know not how it is, unless that our English hearts have more oak than stone in them, and have more filial sympathy with acorns than Alps; but all that we do is small and mean, if not worse—thin, and wasted, and unsubstantial. It is not modern work only; we have built like frogs and mice since the thirteenth century (except only in our castles). What a contrast between the pitiful little pigeon holes which stand for doors in the east front of Salisbury, looking like the entrances to a beehive or a wasp's nest, and the soaring arches and kingly crowning of the gates of Abbeville, Rouen, and Rheims, or the rock-hewn piers of Chartres, or the dark and vaulted porches and writhed pillars of Verona! Of domestic architecture what need is there to speak! How small, how cramped, how poor, how miserable in its petty neatness is our best! how beneath the mark of attack, and the

level of contempt, that which is common with us! What a strange sense of formalised deformity, of shrivelled precision, of starved accuracy, of minute misanthropy have we, as we leave even the rude streets of Picardy for the market towns of Kent! Until that street architecture of ours is bettered, until we give it some size and boldness, until we give our windows recess, and our walls thickness, I know not how we can blame our architects for their feebleness in more important work; their eyes are inured to narrowness and slightness: can we expect them at a word to conceive and deal with breadth and solidity? They ought not to live in our cities; there is that in their miserable walls which bricks up to death men's imaginations, as surely as ever perished forsworn nun. An architect should live as little in cities as a painter. Send him to our hills, and let him study there what nature understands by a buttress, and what by a dome. There was something in the old power of architecture, which it had from the recluse more than from the citizen. The buildings of which I have spoken with chief praise, rose, indeed, out of the war of the piazza, and above the fury of the populace: and Heaven forbid that for such cause we should ever have to lay a larger stone, or rivet a firmer bar, in our England! But we have other sources of power, in the imagery of our iron coasts and azure hills; of power more pure, nor less serene, than that of the hermit spirit which once lighted with white lines of cloisters the glades of the Alpine pine, and raised into ordered spires the wild rocks of the Norman sea; which gave to the temple gate the depth and darkness of Elijah's Horeb cave; and lifted, out of the populous city, grey cliffs of lonely stone, into the midst of sailing birds and silent air

CHAPTER IV.

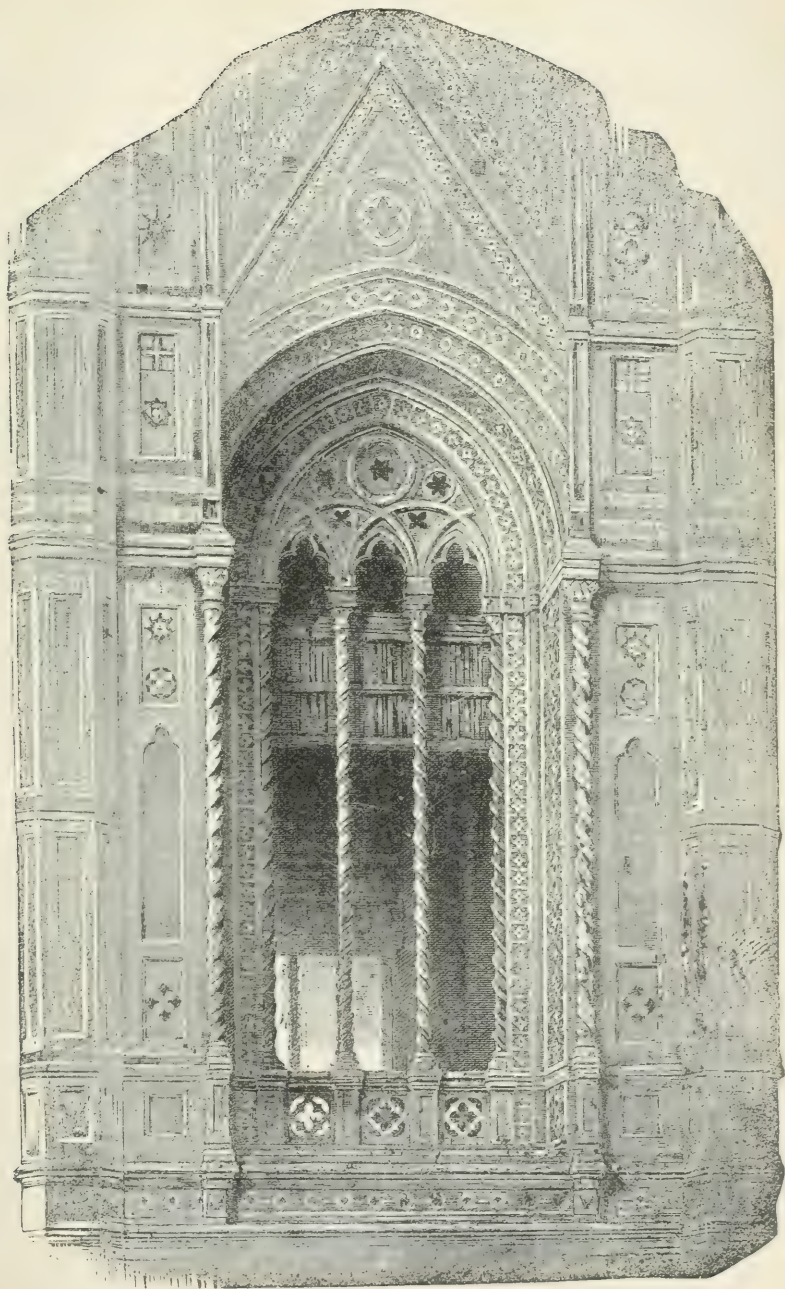
THE LAMP OF BEAUTY.

I. It was stated, in the outset of the preceding chapter, that the value of architecture depended on two distinct characters : the one, the impression it receives from human power ; the other, the image it bears of the natural creation. I have endeavored to show in what manner its majesty was attributable to a sympathy with the effort and trouble of human life (a sympathy as distinctly perceived in the gloom and mystery of form, as it is in the melancholy tones of sounds). I desire now to trace that happier element of its excellence, consisting in a noble rendering of images of Beauty, derived chiefly from the external appearances of organic nature.

It is irrelevant to our present purpose to enter into any inquiry respecting the essential causes of impressions of beauty. I have partly expressed my thoughts on this matter in a previous work, and I hope to develope them hereafter. But since all such inquiries can only be founded on the ordinary understanding of what is meant by the term Beauty, and since they presume that the feeling of mankind on this subject is universal and instinctive, I shall base my present investigation on this assumption ; and only asserting that to be beautiful which I believe will be granted me to be so without dispute, I would endeavor shortly to trace the manner in which this element of delight is to be best engrafted upon architectural design, what are the purest sources from which it is to be derived, and what the errors to be avoided in its pursuit.

II. It will be thought that I have somewhat rashly limited the elements of architectural beauty to imitative forms. I do not mean to assert that every arrangement of line is directly

Plate IX



suggested by a natural object ; but that all beautiful lines are adaptations of those which are commonest in the external creation ; that in proportion to the richness of their association, the resemblance to natural work, as a type and help, must be more closely attempted, and more clearly seen ; and that beyond a certain point, and that a very low one, man cannot advance in the invention of beauty, without directly imitating natural form. Thus, in the Doric temple, the triglyph and cornice are unimitative ; or imitative only of artificial cuttings of wood. No one would call these members beautiful. Their influence over us is in their severity and simplicity. The fluting of the column, which I doubt not was the Greek symbol of the bark of the tree, was imitative in its origin, and feebly resembled many caniculated organic structures. Beauty is instantly felt in it, but of a low order. The decoration proper was sought in the true forms of organic life, and those chiefly human. Again : the Doric capital was unimitative ; but all the beauty it had was dependent on the precision of its ovolo, a natural curve of the most frequent occurrence. The Ionic capital (to my mind, as an architectural invention, exceedingly base) nevertheless depended for all the beauty that it had on its adoption of a spiral line, perhaps the commonest of all that characterise the inferior orders of animal organism and habitation. Farther progress could not be made without a direct imitation of the acanthus leaf.

Again : the Romanesque arch is beautiful as an abstract line. Its type is always before us in that of the apparent vault of heaven, and horizon of the earth. The cylindrical pillar is always beautiful, for God has so moulded the stem of every tree that it is pleasant to the eyes. The pointed arch is beautiful ; it is the termination of every leaf that shakes in summer wind, and its most fortunate associations are directly borrowed from the trefoiled grass of the field, or from the stars of its flowers. Further than this, man's invention could not reach without frank imitation. His next step was to gather the flowers themselves, and wreath them in his capitals.

III. Now, I would insist especially on the fact, of which I

doubt not that further illustrations will occur to the mind of every reader, that all most lovely forms and thoughts are directly taken from natural objects; because I would fain be allowed to assume also the converse of this, namely, that forms which are *not* taken from natural objects *must* be ugly. I know this is a bold assumption; but as I have not space to reason out the points wherein essential beauty of form consists, that being far too serious a work to be undertaken in a bye way, I have no other resource than to use this accidental mark or test of beauty, of whose truth the considerations which I hope hereafter to lay before the reader may assure him. I say an accidental mark, since forms are not beautiful *because* they are copied from nature; only it is out of the power of man to conceive beauty without her aid. I believe the reader will grant me this, even from the examples above advanced; the degree of confidence with which it is granted must attach also to his acceptance of the conclusions which will follow from it; but if it be granted frankly, it will enable me to determine a matter of very essential importance, namely, what *is* or is *not* ornament. For there are many forms of so called decoration in architecture, habitual, and received, therefore, with approval, or at all events without any venture at expression or dislike, which I have no hesitation in asserting to be not ornament at all, but to be ugly things, the expense of which ought in truth to be set down in the architect's contract, as "For Monstrification." I believe that we regard these customary deformities with a savage complacency, as an Indian does his flesh patterns and paint (all nations being in certain degrees and senses savage). I believe that I can prove them to be monstrous, and I hope hereafter to do so conclusively; but, meantime, I can allege in defence of my persuasion nothing but this fact of their being unnatural, to which the reader must attach such weight as he thinks it deserves. There is, however, a peculiar difficulty in using this proof; it requires the writer to assume, very impertinently, that nothing is natural but what he has seen or supposes to exist. I would not do this; for I suppose there is

no conceivable form or grouping of forms but in some part of the universe an example of it may be found. But I think I am justified in considering those forms to be *most* natural which are most frequent; or, rather, that on the shapes which in the every-day world are familiar to the eyes of men, God has stamped those characters of beauty which He has made to man's nature to love; while in certain exceptional forms He has shown that the adoption of the others was not a matter of necessity, but part of the adjusted harmony of creation. I believe that thus we may reason from Frequency to Beauty, and *vice versa*; that knowing a thing to be frequent, we may assume it to be beautiful; and assume that which is most frequent to be most beautiful: I mean, of course, *visibly* frequent; for the forms of things which are hidden in caverns of the earth, or in the anatomy of animal frames, are evidently not intended by their Maker to bear the habitual gaze of man. And, again, by frequency I mean that limited and isolated frequency which is characteristic of all perfection; not mere multitude: as a rose is a common flower, but yet there are not so many roses on the tree as there are leaves. In this respect Nature is sparing of her highest, and lavish of her less, beauty; but I call the flower as frequent as the leaf, because, each in its allotted quantity, where the one is, there will ordinarily be the other.

IV. The first so-called ornament, then, which I would attack is that Greek fret, now, I believe, usually known by the Italian name Guilloche, which is exactly a case in point. It so happens that in crystals of bismuth, formed by the unagitated cooling of the melted metal, there occurs a natural resemblance of it almost perfect. But crystals of bismuth not only are of unusual occurrence in every-day life, but their form is, as far as I know, unique among minerals; and not only unique, but only attainable by an artificial process, the metal itself never being found pure. I do not remember any other substance or arrangement which presents a resemblance to this Greek ornament; and I think that I may trust my remembrance as including most of the arrangements which

occur in the outward forms of common and familiar things. On this ground, then, I allege that ornament to be ugly; or, in the literal sense of the word, monstrous; different from anything which it is the nature of man to admire: and I think an uncarved fillet or plinth infinitely preferable to one covered with this vile concatenation of straight lines: unless indeed it be employed as a foil to a true ornament, which it may, perhaps, sometimes with advantage; or excessively small, as it occurs on coins, the harshness of its arrangement being less perceived.

V. Often in association with this horrible design we find, in Greek works, one which is as beautiful as this is painful—that egg and dart moulding, whose perfection in its place and way, has never been surpassed. And why is this? Simply because the form of which it is chiefly composed is one not only familiar to us in the soft housing of the bird's nest, but happens to be that of nearly every pebble that rolls and murmurs under the surf of the sea, on all its endless shore. And with that a peculiar accuracy; for the mass which bears the light in this moulding is *not* in good Greek work, as in the frieze of the Erechtheum, merely of the shape of an egg. It is *flattened* on the upper surface, with a delicacy and keen sense of variety in the curve which it is impossible too highly to praise, attaining exactly that flattened, imperfect oval, which, in nine cases out of ten, will be the form of the pebble lifted at random from the rolled beach. Leave out this flatness, and the moulding is vulgar instantly. It is singular also that the insertion of this rounded form in the hollow recess has a *painted* type in the plumage of the Argus pheasant, the eyes of whose feathers are so shaded as exactly to represent an oval form placed in a hollow.

VI. It will evidently follow, upon our application of this test of natural resemblance, that we shall at once conclude that all perfectly beautiful forms must be composed of curves; since there is hardly any common natural form in which it is possible to discover a straight line. Nevertheless, Architecture, having necessarily to deal with straight lines essential to its

purposes in many instances and to the expression of its power in others, must frequently be content with that measure of beauty which is consistent with such primal forms ; and we may presume that utmost measure of beauty to have been attained when the arrangements of such lines are consistent with the most frequent natural groupings of them we can discover, although, to find right lines in nature at all, we may be compelled to do violence to her finished work, break through the sculptured and colored surfaces of her crags, and examine the processes of their crystallisation.

VII. I have just convicted the Greek fret of ugliness, because it has no precedent to allege for its arrangement except an artificial form of a rare metal. Let us bring into court an ornament of Lombard architects, Plate XII. fig. 7, as exclusively composed of right lines as the other, only, observe, with the noble element of shadow added. This ornament, taken from the front of the Cathedral of Pisa, is universal throughout the Lombard churches of Pisa, Lucca, Pistoja, and Florence ; and it will be a grave stain upon them if it cannot be defended. Its first apology for itself, made in a hurry, sounds marvellously like the Greek one, and highly dubious. It says that its terminal contour is the very image of a carefully prepared artificial crystal of common salt. Salt being, however, a substance considerably more familiar to us than bismuth, the chances are somewhat in favor of the accused Lombard ornament already. But it has more to say for itself, and more to the purpose ; namely, that its main outline is one not only of natural crystallisation, but among the very first and commonest of crystalline forms, being the primal condition of the occurrence of the oxides of iron, copper, and tin, of the sulphurets of iron and lead, of fluor spar, &c. ; and that those projecting forms in its surface represent the conditions of structure which effect the change into another relative and equally common crystalline form, the cube. This is quite enough. We may rest assured it is as good a combination of such simple right lines as can be put together, and gracefully fitted for every place in which such lines are necessary

VIII. The next ornament whose cause I would try is that of our Tudor work, the portcullis. Reticulation is common enough in natural form, and very beautiful; but it is either of the most delicate and gauzy texture, or of variously sized meshes and undulating lines. There is no family relation between portcullis and cobwebs or beetles' wings; something like it, perhaps, may be found in some kinds of crocodile armor and on the backs of the Northern divers, but always beautifully varied in size of mesh. There is a dignity in the thing itself, if its size were exhibited, and the shade given through its bars; but even these merits are taken away in the Tudor diminution of it, set on a solid surface. It has not a single syllable, I believe, to say in its defence. It is another monster, absolutely and unmitigatedly frightful. All that carving on Henry the Seventh's Chapel simply deforms the stones of it.

In the same clause with the portcullis, we may condemn all heraldic decoration, so far as beauty is its object. Its pride and significance have their proper place, fitly occurring in prominent parts of the building, as over its gates; and allowably in places where its legendary may be plainly read, as in painted windows, bosses of ceilings, &c. And sometimes, of course, the forms which it presents may be beautiful, as of animals, or simple symbols like the fleur-de-lis; but, for the most part, heraldic similitudes and arrangements are so professedly and pointedly unnatural, that it would be difficult to invent anything uglier; and the use of them as a repeated decoration will utterly destroy both the power and beauty of any building. Common sense and courtesy also forbid their repetition. It is right to tell those who enter your doors that you are such a one, and of such a rank; but to tell it to them again and again, wherever they turn, becomes soon impertinence, and at last folly. Let, therefore, the entire bearings occur in few places, and these not considered as an ornament, but as an inscription; and for frequent appliance, let any single and fair symbol be chosen out of them. Thus we may multiply as much as we choose the French fleur-de-lis, or the Florentine

giglio bianco, or the English rose ; but we must not multiply a King's arms.

IX. It will also follow, from these considerations, that if any one part of heraldic decoration be worse than another, it is the motto : since, of all things unlike nature, the forms of letters are, perhaps, the most so. Even graphic tellurium and felspar look, at their clearest, anything but legible. All letters are, therefore, to be considered as frightful things, and to be endured only upon occasion ; that is to say, in places where the sense of the inscription is of more importance than external ornament. Inscriptions in churches, in rooms, and on pictures, are often desirable, but they are not to be considered as architectural or pictorial ornaments : they are, on the contrary, obstinate offences to the eye, not to be suffered except when their intellectual office introduces them. Place them, therefore, where they will be read, and there only ; and let them be plainly written, and not turned upside down, nor wrong end first. It is an ill sacrifice to beauty to make that illegible whose only merit is in its sense. Write it as you would speak it, simply ; and do not draw the eye to it when it would fain rest elsewhere, nor recommend your sentence by anything but a little openness of place and architectural silence about it. Write the Commandments on the church walls where they may be plainly seen, but do not put a dash and a tail to every letter ; and remember that you are an architect, not a writing master.

X. Inscriptions appear sometimes to be introduced for the sake of the scroll on which they are written ; and in late and modern painted glass, as well as in architecture, these scrolls are flourished and turned hither and thither as if they were ornamental. Ribands occur frequently in arabesques,—in some of a high order, too,—tying up flowers, or flitting in and out among the fixed forms. Is there anything like ribands in nature ? It might be thought that grass and sea-weed afforded apologetic types. They do not. There is a wide difference between their structure and that of a riband. They have a skeleton, an anatomy, a central rib, or fibre, or framework of

some kind or another, which has a beginning and an end, a root and head, and whose make and strength effects every direction of their motion, and every line of their form. The loosest weed that drifts and waves under the heaving of the sea, or hangs heavily on the brown and slippery shore, has a marked strength, structure, elasticity, gradation of substance; its extremities are more finely fibred than its centre, its centre than its root: every fork of its ramification is measured and proportioned; every wave of its languid lines is love. It has its allotted size, and place, and function; it is a specific creature. What is there like this in a riband? It has no structure: it is a succession of cut threads all alike; it has no skeleton, no make, no form, no size, no will of its own. You cut it and crush it into what you will. It has no strength, no languor. It cannot fall into a single graceful form. It cannot wave, in the true sense, but only flutter: it cannot bend, in the true sense, but only turn and be wrinkled. It is a vile thing; it spoils all that is near its wretched film of an existence. Never use it. Let the flowers come loose if they cannot keep together without being tied; leave the sentence unwritten if you cannot write it on a tablet or book, or plain roll of paper. I know what authority there is against me. I remember the scrolls of Perugino's angels, and the ribands of Raphael's arabesques, and of Ghiberti's glorious bronze flowers: no matter; they are every one of them vices and uglinesses. Raphael usually felt this, and used an honest and rational tablet, as in the *Madonna di Fuligno*. I do not say there is any type of such tablets in nature, but all the difference lies in the fact that the tablet is not considered as an ornament, and the riband, or flying scroll, is. The tablet, as in Albert Durer's *Adam and Eve*, is introduced for the sake of the writing, understood and allowed as an ugly but necessary interruption. The scroll is extended as an ornamental form, which it is not, nor ever can be.

XI. But it will be said that all this want of organisation and form might be affirmed of drapery also, and that this latter is a noble subject of sculpture. By no means. When

was drapery a subject of sculpture by itself, except in the form of a handkerchief on urns in the seventeenth century and in some of the baser scenic Italian decorations? Drapery, as such, is always ignoble; it becomes a subject of interest only by the colors it bears, and the impressions which it receives from some foreign form or force. All noble draperies, either in painting or sculpture (color and texture being at present out of our consideration), have, so far as they are anything more than necessities, one of two great functions; they are the exponents of motion and of gravitation. They are the most valuable means of expressing past as well as present motion in the figure, and they are almost the only means of indicating to the eye the force of gravity which resists such motion. The Greeks used drapery in sculpture for the most part as an ugly necessity, but availed themselves of it gladly in all representation of action, exaggerating the arrangements of it which express lightness in the material, and follow gesture in the person. The Christian sculptors, caring little for the body, or disliking it, and depending exclusively on the countenance, received drapery at first contentedly as a veil, but soon perceived a capacity of expression in it which the Greek had not seen or had despised. The principal element of this expression was the entire removal of agitation from what was so pre-eminently capable of being agitated. It fell from their human forms plumb down, sweeping the ground heavily, and concealing the feet; while the Greek drapery was often blown away from the thigh. The thick and coarse stuffs of the monkish dresses, so absolutely opposed to the thin and gauzy web of antique material, suggested simplicity of division as well as weight of fall. There was no crushing nor subdividing them. And thus the drapery gradually came to represent the spirit of repose as it before had of motion, repose saintly and severe. The wind had no power upon the garment, as the passion none upon the soul; and the motion of the figure only bent into a softer line the stillness of the falling veil, followed by it like a slow cloud by drooping rain: only in links of lighter undulation it followed the dances of the angels.

Thus treated, drapery is indeed noble ; but it is as an exponent of other and higher things. As that of gravitation, it has especial majesty, being literally the only means we have of fully representing this mysterious natural force of earth (for falling water is less passive and less defined in its lines). So, again, in sails it is beautiful because it receives the forms of solid curved surface, and expresses the force of another invisible element. But drapery trusted to its own merits, and given for its own sake,—drapery like that of Carlo Dolci and the Caraccis,—is always base.

XII. Closely connected with the abuse of scrolls and bands, is that of garlands and festoons of flowers as an architectural decoration, for unnatural arrangements are just as ugly as unnatural forms ; and architecture, in borrowing the objects of nature, is bound to place them, as far as may be in her power, in such associations as may befit and express their origin. She is not to imitate directly the natural arrangement ; she is not to carve irregular stems of ivy up her columns to account for the leaves at the top, but she is nevertheless to place her most exuberant vegetable ornament just where Nature would have placed it, and to give some indication of that radical and connected structure which Nature would have given it. Thus the Corinthian capital is beautiful, because it expands under the abacus just as Nature would have expanded it ; and because it looks as if the leaves had one root, though that root is unseen. And the flamboyant leaf mouldings are beautiful, because they nestle and run up the hollows, and fill the angles, and clasp the shafts which natural leaves would have delighted to fill and to clasp. They are no mere cast of natural leaves : they are counted, orderly, and architectural : but they are naturally, and therefore beautifully, placed.

XIII. Now I do not mean to say that Nature never uses festoons : she loves them, and uses them lavishly ; and though she does so only in those places of excessive luxuriance wherein it seems to me that architectural types should seldom be sought, yet a falling tendril or pendent bough might, if managed with freedom and grace, be well introduced into luxuriant decora-

tion (or if not, it is not their want of beauty, but of architectural fitness, which incapacitates them for such uses). But what resemblance to such example can we trace in a mass of all manner of fruit and flowers, tied heavily into a long bunch, thickest in the middle, and pinned up by both ends against a dead wall? For it is strange that the wildest and most fanciful of the builders of truly luxuriant architecture never ventured, so far as I know, even a pendent tendril; while the severest masters of the revived Greek permitted this extraordinary piece of luscious ugliness to be fastened in the middle of their blank surfaces. So surely as this arrangement is adopted, the whole value of the flower work is lost. Who among the crowds that gaze upon the building ever pause to admire the flower work of St. Paul's? It is as careful and as rich as it can be, yet it adds no delightfulness to the edifice. It is no part of it. It is an ugly excrescence. We always conceive the building without it, and should be happier if our conception were not disturbed by its presence. It makes the rest of the architecture look poverty-stricken, instead of sublime; and yet it is never enjoyed itself. Had it been put, where it ought, into the capitals, it would have been beheld with never-ceasing delight. I do not mean that it could have been so in the present building, for such kind of architecture has no business with rich ornament in any place; but that if those groups of flowers had been put into natural places in an edifice of another style, their value would have been felt as vividly as now their uselessness. What applies to festoons is still more sternly true of garlands. A garland is meant to be seen upon a head. There it is beautiful, because we suppose it newly gathered and joyfully worn. But it is not meant to be hung upon a wall. If you want a circular ornament, put a flat circle of colored marble, as in the Casa Dario and other such palaces at Venice; or put a star, or a medallion, or if you want a ring, put a solid one, but do not carve the images of garlands, looking as if they had been used in the last procession, and been hung up to dry, and serve next time withered. Why not also carve pegs, and hats upon them?

XIV. One of the worst enemies of modern Gothic archi-

ture, though seemingly an unimportant feature, is an excrescence, as offensive by its poverty as the garland by its profusion, the dripstone in the shape of the handle of a chest of drawers, which is used over the square-headed windows of what we call Elizabethan buildings. In the last Chapter, it will be remembered that the square form was shown to be that of pre-eminent Power, and to be properly adapted and limited to the exhibition of space or surface. Hence, when the window is to be an exponent of power, as for instance in those by M. Angelo in the lower story of the Palazzo Ricardi at Florence, the square head is the most noble form they can assume; but then either their space must be unbroken, and their associated mouldings the most severe, or else the square must be used as a finial outline, and is chiefly to be associated with forms of tracery, in which the relative form of power, the circle, is predominant, as in Venetian, and Florentine, and Pisan Gothic. But if you break upon your terminal square, or if you cut its lines off at the top and turn them outwards, you have lost its unity and space. It is an including form no longer, but an added, isolated line, and the ugliest possible. Look abroad into the landscape and see if you can discover any one so bent and fragmentary as that of this strange windlass-looking dripstone. You cannot. It is a monster. It unites every element of ugliness, its line is harshly broken in itself, and unconnected with every other; it has no harmony either with structure or decoration, it has no architectural support, it looks glued to the wall, and the only pleasant property it has, is the appearance of some likelihood of its dropping off.

I might proceed, but the task is a weary one, and I think I have named those false forms of decoration which are most dangerous in our modern architecture as being legal and accepted. The barbarisms of individual fancy are as countless as they are contemptible; they neither admit attack nor are worth it; but these above named are countenanced, some by the practice of antiquity, all by high authority: they have depressed the proudest, and contaminated the purest schools, and are so established in recent practice that I write rather for the

barren satisfaction of bearing witness against them, than with hope of inducing any serious convictions to their prejudice.

XV. Thus far of what is *not* ornament. What ornament is, will without difficulty be determined by the application of the same test. It must consist of such studious arrangements of form as are imitative or suggestive of those which are commonest among natural existences, that being of course the noblest ornament which represents the highest orders of existence. Imitated flowers are nobler than imitated stones, imitated animals, than flowers; imitated human form of all animal forms the noblest. But all are combined in the richest ornamental work; and the rock, the fountain, the flowing river with its pebbled bed, the sea, the clouds of Heaven, the herb of the field, the fruit-tree bearing fruit, the creeping thing, the bird, the beast, the man, and the angel, mingle their fair forms on the bronze of Ghiberti.

Every thing being then ornamental that is imitative, I would ask the reader's attention to a few general considerations, all that can here be offered relating to so vast a subject; which, for convenience sake, may be classed under the three heads of inquiry:—What is the right place for architectural ornament? What is the peculiar treatment of ornament which renders it architectural? and what is the right use of color as associated with architectural imitative form?

XVI. What is the place for ornament? Consider first that the characters of natural objects which the architect can represent are few and abstract. The greater part of those delights by which Nature recommends herself to man at all times, cannot be conveyed by him into his imitative work. He cannot make his grass green and cool and good to rest upon, which in nature is its chief use to man; nor can he make his flowers tender and full of color and of scent, which in nature are their chief powers of giving joy. Those qualities which alone he can secure are certain severe characters of form, such as men only see in nature on deliberate examination, and by the full and set appliance of sight and thought: a man must lie down on the bank of grass on his breast and set himself to watch

and penetrate the intertwining of it, before he finds that which is good to be gathered by the architect. So then while Nature is at all times pleasant to us, and while the sight and sense of her work may mingle happily with all our thoughts, and labors, and times of existence, that image of her which the architect carries away represents what we can only perceive in her by direct intellectual exertion, and demands from us, wherever it appears, an intellectual exertion of a similar kind in order to understand it and feel it. It is the written or sealed impression of a thing sought out, it is the shaped result of inquiry and bodily expression of thought.

XVII. Now let us consider for an instant what would be the effect of continually repeating an expression of a beautiful thought to any other of the senses at times when the mind could not address that sense to the understanding of it. Suppose that in time of serious occupation, of stern business, a companion should repeat in our ears continually some favorite passage of poetry, over and over again all day long. We should not only soon be utterly sick and weary of the sound of it, but that sound would at the end of the day have so sunk into the habit of the ear that the entire meaning of the passage would be dead to us, and it would ever thenceforward require some effort to fix and recover it. The music of it would not meanwhile have aided the business in hand, while its own delightfulness would thenceforward be in a measure destroyed. It is the same with every other form of definite thought. If you violently present its expression to the senses, at times when the mind is otherwise engaged, that expression will be ineffective at the time, and will have its sharpness and clearness destroyed for ever. Much more if you present it to the mind at times when it is painfully affected or disturbed, or if you associate the expression of pleasant thought with incongruous circumstances, you will affect that expression thenceforward with a painful color for ever.

XVIII. Apply this to expressions of thought received by the eye. Remember that the eye is at your mercy more than the ear. "The eye it cannot choose but see." Its nerve is

not so easily numbered as that of the ear, and it is often busied in tracing and watching forms when the ear is at rest. Now if you present lovely forms to it when it cannot call the mind to help it in its work, and among objects of vulgar use and unhappy position, you will neither please the eye nor elevate the vulgar object. But you will fill and weary the eye with the beautiful form, and you will infect that form itself with the vulgarity of the thing to which you have violently attached it. It will never be of much use to you any more; you have killed or defiled it; its freshness and purity are gone. You will have to pass it through the fire of much thought before you will cleanse it, and warm it with much love before it will revive.

XIX. Hence then a general law, of singular importance in the present day, a law of simple common sense,—not to decorate things belonging to purposes of active and occupied life. Wherever you can rest, there decorate; where rest is forbidden, so is beauty. You must not mix ornament with business, any more than you may mix play. Work first, and then rest. Work first and then gaze, but do not use golden ploughshares, nor bind ledgers in enamel. Do not thrash with sculptured flails: nor put bas-reliefs on millstones. What! it will be asked, are we in the habit of doing so? Even so; always and everywhere. The most familiar position of Greek mouldings is in these days on shop fronts. There is not a tradesman's sign nor shelf nor counter in all the streets of all our cities, which has not upon it ornaments which were invented to adorn temples and beautify kings' palaces. There is not the smallest advantage in them where they are. Absolutely valueless—utterly without the power of giving pleasure, they only satiate the eye, and vulgarise their own forms. Many of these are in themselves thoroughly good copies of fine things, which things themselves we shall never, in consequence, enjoy any more. Many a pretty beading and graceful bracket there is in wood or stucco above our grocers' and cheese-mongers' and hosiers' shops: how it is that the tradesmen cannot understand that custom is to be had only by selling good tea and

cheese and cloth, and that people come to them for their honesty, and their readiness, and their right wares, and not because they have Greek cornices over their windows, or their names in large gilt letters on their house fronts? how pleasurable it would be to have the power of going through the streets of London, pulling down those brackets and friezes and large names, restoring to the tradesmen the capital they had spent in architecture, and putting them on honest and equal terms, each with his name in black letters over his door, not shouted down the street from the upper stories, and each with a plain wooden shop casement, with small panes in it that people would not think of breaking in order to be sent to prison! How much better for them would it be—how much happier, how much wiser, to put their trust upon their own truth and industry, and not on the idiocy of their customers. It is curious, and it says little for our national probity on the one hand, or prudence on the other, to see the whole system of our street decoration based on the idea that people must be baited to a shop as moths are to a candle.

XX. But it will be said that much of the best wooden decoration of the middle ages was in shop fronts. No; it was in *house* fronts, of which the shop was a part, and received its natural and consistent portion of the ornament. In those days men lived, and intended to live *by* their shops, and over them, all their days. They were contented with them and happy in them: they were their palaces and castles. They gave them therefore such decoration as made themselves happy in their own habitation, and they gave it for their own sake. The upper stories were always the richest, and the shop was decorated chiefly about the door, which belonged to the house more than to it. And when our tradesmen settle to their shops in the same way, and form no plans respecting future villa architecture, let their whole houses be decorated, and their shops too, but with a national and domestic decoration (I shall speak more of this point in the sixth chapter). However, our cities are for the most part too large to admit of contented dwelling in them throughout life; and I do not say there is harm in

our present system of separating the shop from the dwelling-house; only where they are so separated, let us remember that the only reason for shop decoration is removed, and see that the decoration be removed also.

XXI. Another of the strange and evil tendencies of the present day is to the decoration of the railroad station. Now, if there be any place in the world in which people are deprived of that portion of temper and discretion which are necessary to the contemplation of beauty, it is there. It is the very temple of discomfort, and the only charity that the builder can extend to us is to show us, plainly as may be, how soonest to escape from it. The whole system of railroad travelling is addressed to people who, being in a hurry, are therefore, for the time being, miserable. No one would travel in that manner who could help it—who had time to go leisurely over hills and between hedges, instead of through tunnels and between banks: at least those who would, have no sense of beauty so acute as that we need consult it at the station. The railroad is in all its relations a matter of earnest business, to be got through as soon as possible. It transmutes a man from a traveller into a living parcel. For the time he has parted with the nobler characteristics of his humanity for the sake of a planetary power of locomotion. Do not ask him to admire anything. You might as well ask the wind. Carry him safely, dismiss him soon: he will thank you for nothing else. All attempts to please him in any other way are mere mockery, and insults to the things by which you endeavor to do so. There never was more flagrant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in anything concerned with railroads or near them. Keep them out of the way, take them through the ugliest country you can find, confess them the miserable things they are, and spend nothing upon them but for safety and speed. Give large salaries to efficient servants, large prices to good manufacturers, large wages to able workmen; let the iron be tough, and the brickwork solid, and the carriages strong. The time is perhaps not distant when these first necessities may not be easily met: and to increase expense

in any other direction is madness. Better bury gold in the embankments, than put it in ornaments on the stations. Will a single traveller be willing to pay an increased fare on the South Western, because the columns of the terminus are covered with patterns from Nineveh? He will only care less for the Ninevite ivories in the British Museum: or on the North Western, because there are old English-looking span-drils to the roof of the station at Crewe? He will only have less pleasure in their prototypes at Crewe House. Railroad architecture has or would have a dignity of its own if it were only left to its work. You would not put rings on the fingers of a smith at his anvil.

XXII. It is not however only in these marked situations that the abuse of which I speak takes place. There is hardly, at present, an application of ornamental work, which is not in some sort liable to blame of the same kind. We have a bad habit of trying to disguise disagreeable necessities by some form of sudden decoration, which is, in all other places, associated with such necessities. I will name only one instance, that to which I have alluded before—the roses which conceal the ventilators in the flat roofs of our chapels. Many of those roses are of very beautiful design, borrowed from fine works: all their grace and finish are invisible when they are so placed, but their general form is afterwards associated with the ugly buildings in which they constantly occur; and all the beautiful roses of the early French and English Gothic, especially such elaborate ones as those of the triforium of Contances, are in consequence deprived of their pleasurable influence: and this without our having accomplished the smallest good by the use we have made of the dishonored form. Not a single person in the congregation ever receives one ray of pleasure from those roof roses; they are regarded with mere indifference, or lost in the general impression of harsh emptiness.

XXIII. Must not beauty, then, it will be asked, be sought for in the forms which we associate with our every-day life? Yes, if you do it consistently, and in places where it can be

calmly seen; but not if you use the beautiful form only as a mask and covering of the proper conditions and uses of things, nor if you thrust it into the places set apart for toil. Put it in the drawing-room, not into the workshop; put it upon domestic furniture, not upon tools of handicraft. All men have sense of what is right in this manner, if they would only use and apply that sense; every man knows where and how beauty gives him pleasure, if he would only ask for it when it does so, and not allow it to be forced upon him when he does not want it. Ask any one of the passengers over London Bridge at this instant whether he cares about the forms of the bronze leaves on its lamps, and he will tell you, No. Modify these forms of leaves to a less scale, and put them on his milk-jug at breakfast, and ask him whether he likes them, and he will tell you, Yes. People have no need of teaching if they could only think and speak truth, and ask for what they like and want, and for nothing else: nor can a right disposition of beauty be ever arrived at except by this common sense, and allowance for the circumstances of the time and place. It does not follow, because bronze leafage is in bad taste on the lamps of London Bridge, that it would be so on those of the Ponte della Trinita; nor, because it would be a folly to decorate the house fronts of Gracechurch Street, that it would be equally so to adorn those of some quiet provincial town. The question of greatest external or internal decoration depends entirely on the conditions of probable repose. It was a wise feeling which made the streets of Venice so rich in external ornament, for there is no couch of rest like the gondola. So, again, there is no subject of street ornament so wisely chosen as the fountain, where it is a fountain of use; for it is just there that perhaps the happiest pause takes place in the labor of the day, when the pitcher is rested on the edge of it, and the breath of the beare is drawn deeply, and the hair swept from the forehead, and the uprightness of the form declined against the marble ledge, and the sound of the kind word or light laugh mixes with the trickle of the falling water, heard shriller and shriller as the pitcher fills. What pause is so sweet as that—so full

of the depth of ancient days, so softened with the calm of pastoral solitude?

XXIV. II. Thus far, then, of the place for beauty. We were next to inquire into the characters which fitted it peculiarly for architectural appliance, and into the principles of choice and of arrangement which best regulate the imitation of natural forms in which it consists. The full answering of these questions would be a treatise on the art of design: I intend only to say a few words respecting the two conditions of that art which are essentially architectural,—Proportion and Abstraction. Neither of these qualities is necessary, to the same extent, in other fields of design. The sense of proportion is, by the landscape painter, frequently sacrificed to character and accident; the power of abstraction to that of complete realisation. The flowers of his foreground must often be unmeasured in their quantity, loose in their arrangement: what is calculated, either in quantity or disposition, must be artfully concealed. That calculation is by the architect to be prominently exhibited. So the abstraction of few characteristics out of many is shown only in the painter's sketch; in his finished work it is concealed or lost in completion. Architecture, on the contrary, delights in Abstraction and fears to complete her forms. Proportion and Abstraction, then, are the two especial marks of architectural design as distinguished from all other. Sculpture must have them in inferior degrees; leaning, on the one hand, to an architectural manner, when it is usually greatest (becoming, indeed, a part of Architecture), and, on the other, to a pictorial manner, when it is apt to lose its dignity, and sink into mere ingenious carving.

XXV. Now, of Proportion so much has been written, that I believe the only facts which are of practical use have been overwhelmed and kept out of sight by vain accumulations of particular instances and estimates. Proportions are as infinite (and that in all kinds of things, as severally in colors, lines, shades, lights, and forms) as possible airs in music: and it is just as rational an attempt to teach a young architect how to proportion truly and well by calculating for him the propor-

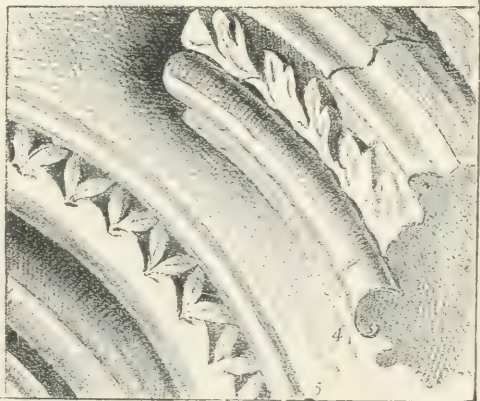
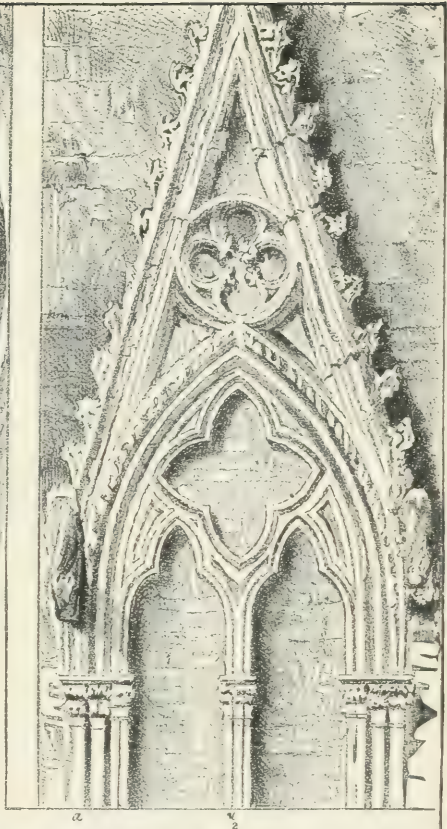
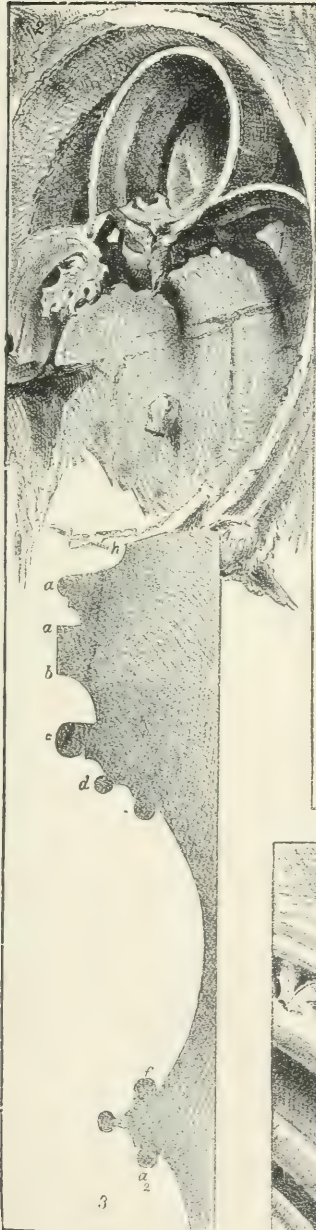
tions of fine works, as it would be to teach him to compose melodies by calculating the mathematical relations of the notes in Beethoven's *Adelaïde* or Mozart's *Requiem*. The man who has eye and intellect will invent beautiful proportions, and cannot help it; but he can no more tell *us* how to do it than Wordsworth could tell us how to write a sonnet, or than Scott could have told us how to plan a romance. But there are one or two general laws which can be told: they are of no use, indeed, except as preventives of gross mistake, but they are so far worth telling and remembering; and the more so because, in the discussion of the subtle laws of proportion (which will never be either numbered or known), architects are perpetually forgetting and transgressing the very simplest of its necessities.

XXVI. Of which the first is, that wherever Proportion exists at all, one member of the composition must be either larger than, or in some way supreme over, the rest. There is no proportion between equal things. They can have symmetry only, and symmetry without proportion is not composition. It is necessary to perfect beauty, but it is the least necessary of its elements, nor of course is there any difficulty in obtaining it. Any succession of equal things is agreeable; but to compose is to arrange unequal things, and the first thing to be done in beginning a composition is to determine which is to be the principal thing. I believe that all that has been written and taught about proportion, put together, is not to the architect worth the single rule, well enforced, "Have one large thing and several smaller things, or one principal thing and several inferior things, and bind them well together." Sometimes there may be a regular gradation, as between the heights of stories in good designs for houses; sometimes a monarch with a lowly train, as in the spire with its pinnacles: the varieties of arrangement are infinite, but the law is universal—have one thing above the rest, either by size, or office, or interest. Don't put the pinnacles without the spire. What a host of ugly church towers have we in England, with pinnacles at the corners, and none in the middle! How many buildings like King's College Chapel at Cambridge, looking like tables upside down, with

their four legs in the air! What! it will be said, have not beasts four legs? Yes, but legs of different shapes, and with a head between them. So they have a pair of ears: and perhaps a pair of horns: but not at both ends. Knock down a couple of pinnacles at either end in King's College Chapel, and you will have a kind of proportion instantly. So in a cathedral you may have one tower in the centre, and two at the west end; or two at the west end only, though a worse arrangement: but you must not have two at the west and two at the east end, unless you have some central member to connect them; and even then, buildings are generally bad which have large balancing features at the extremities, and small connecting ones in the centre, because it is not easy then to make the centre dominant. The bird or moth may indeed have wide wings, because the size of the wing does not give supremacy to the wing. The head and life are the mighty things, and the plumes, however wide, are subordinate. In fine west fronts with a pediment and two towers, the centre is always the principal mass, both in bulk and interest (as having the main gateway), and the towers are subordinated to it, as an animal's horns are to its head. The moment the towers rise so high as to overpower the body and centre, and become themselves the principal masses, they will destroy the proportion, unless they are made unequal, and one of them the leading feature of the cathedral, as at Antwerp and Strasburg. But the purer method is to keep them down in due relation to the centre, and to throw up the pediment into a steep connecting mass, drawing the eye to it by rich tracery. This is nobly done in St. Wulfran of Abbeville, and attempted partly at Rouen, though that west front is made up of so many unfinished and supervening designs that it is impossible to guess the real intention of any one of its builders.

XXVII. This rule of supremacy applies to the smallest as well as to the leading features: it is interestingly seen in the arrangement of all good mouldings. I have given one, on the opposite page, from Rouen cathedral; that of the tracery before distinguished as a type of the noblest manner of Northern

Plate X.



Gothic (Chap. II. § XXII.). It is a tracery of three orders, of which the first is divided into a leaf moulding, fig. 4, and *b* in the section, and a plain roll, also seen in fig. 4, *c* in the section; these two divisions surround the entire window or panelling, and are carried by two-face shafts of corresponding sections. The second and third orders are plain rolls following the line of the tracery; four divisions of moulding in all: of these four, the leaf moulding is, as seen in the sections, much the largest; next to it the outer roll; then, by an exquisite alternation, the innermost roll (*e*), in order that it may not be lost in the recess and the intermediate (*d*), the smallest. Each roll has its own shaft and capital; and the two smaller, which in effect upon the eye, owing to the retirement of the innermost, are nearly equal, have smaller capitals than the two larger, lifted a little to bring them to the same level. The wall in the trefoiled lights is curved, as from *e* to *f* in the section; but in the quatrefoil it is flat, only thrown back to the full depth of the recess below so as to get a sharp shadow instead of a soft one, the mouldings falling back to it in nearly a vertical curve behind the roll *e*. This could not, however, be managed with the simpler mouldings of the smaller quatrefoil above, whose half section is given from *g* to *g*₂; but the architect was evidently fretted by the heavy look of its circular foils as opposed to the light spring of the arches below: so he threw its cusps obliquely clear from the wall, as seen in fig. 2, attached to it where they meet the circle, but with their finials pushed out from the natural level (*h*, in the section) to that of the first order (*g*₂) and supported by stone props behind, as seen in the profile fig. 2, which I got from the correspondent panel on the buttress face (fig. 1 being on its side), and of which the lower cusps, being broken away, show the remnant of one of their props projecting from the wall. The oblique curve thus obtained in the profile is of singular grace. Take it all in all, I have never met with a more exquisite piece of varied, yet severe, proportioned and general arrangement (though all the windows of the period are fine, and especially delightful in the subordinate

proportioning of the smaller capitals to the smaller shafts). The only fault it has is the inevitable misarrangement of the central shafts; for the enlargement of the inner roll, though beautiful in the group of four divisions at the side, causes, in the triple central shaft, the very awkwardness of heavy lateral members which has just been in most instances condemned. In the windows of the choir, and in most of the period, this difficulty is avoided by making the fourth order a fillet which only follows the foliation, while the three outermost are nearly in arithmetical progression of size, and the central triple shaft has of course the largest roll in front. The moulding of the Palazzo Foscari (Plate VIII., and Plate IV. fig. 8) is, for so simple a group, the grandest in effect I have ever seen: it is composed of a large roll with two subordinates.

XXVIII. It is of course impossible to enter into details of instances belonging to so intricate division of our subject, in the compass of a general essay. I can but rapidly name the chief conditions of right. Another of these is the connection of Symmetry with horizontal, and of Proportion with vertical, division. Evidently there is in symmetry a sense not merely of equality, but of balance: now a thing cannot be balanced by another on the top of it, though it may by one at the side of it. Hence, while it is not only allowable, but often necessary, to divide buildings, or parts of them, horizontally into halves, thirds, or other equal parts, all vertical divisions of this kind are utterly wrong; worst into half, next worst in the regular numbers which more betray the equality. I should have thought this almost the first principle of proportion which a young architect was taught: and yet I remember an important building, recently erected in England, in which the columns are cut in half by the projecting architraves of the central windows: and it is quite usual to see the spires of modern Gothic churches divided by a band of ornament half way up. In all fine spires there are two bands and three parts, as at Salisbury. The ornamented portion of the tower is there cut in half, and allowably, because the spire forms the third mass to

which the other two are subordinate: two stories are also equal in Giotto's campanile, but dominant over smaller divisions below, and subordinated to the noble third above. Even this arrangement is difficult to treat; and it is usually safer to increase or diminish the height of the divisions regularly as they rise, as in the Doge's Palace, whose three divisions are in a bold geometrical progression: or, in towers, to get an alternate proportion between the body, the belfry, and the crown, as in the campanile of St. Mark's. But, at all events, get rid of equality; leave that to children and their card houses: the laws of nature and the reason of man are alike against it, in arts, as in politics. There is but one thoroughly ugly tower in Italy that I know of, and that is so because it is divided into vertical equal parts: the tower of Pisa.¹²

XXIX. One more principle of Proportion I have to name, equally simple, equally neglected. Proportion is between three terms at *least*. Hence, as the pinnacles are not enough without the spire, so neither the spire without the pinnacles. All men feel this and usually express their feeling by saying that the pinnacles conceal the junction of the spire and tower. This is one reason; but a more influential one is, that the pinnacles furnish the third term to the spire and tower. So that it is not enough, in order to secure proportion, to divide a building unequally; it must be divided into at least three parts; it may be into more (and in details with advantage), but on a large scale I find three is about the best number of parts in elevation, and five in horizontal extent, with freedom of increase to five in the one case and seven in the other; but not to more without confusion (in architecture, that is to say; for in organic structure the numbers cannot be limited). I purpose, in the course of works which are in preparation, to give copious illustrations of this subject, but I will take at present only one instance of vertical proportion, from the flower stem of the common water plantain, *Alisma Plantago*. Fig. 5. Plate XII. is a reduced profile of one side of a plant gathered at random; it is seen to have five masts, of which, however, the uppermost is a mere shoot, and we can consider only their relations up to the

fourth. Their lengths are measured on the line AB , which is the actual length of the lowest mass $a b$, $AC = b c$, $AD = c d$, and $AE = d e$. If the reader will take the trouble to measure these lengths and compare them, he will find that, within half a line, the uppermost $AE = \frac{5}{7}$ of AD , $AD = \frac{6}{8}$ of AC , and $AC = \frac{7}{9}$ of AB ; a most subtle diminishing proportion. From each of the joints spring three major and three minor branches, each between each; but the major branches, at any joint, are placed over the minor branches at the joint below, by the curious arrangement of the joint itself—the stem is bluntly triangular; fig. 6 shows the section of any joint. The outer darkened triangle is the section of the lower stem; the inner, left light, of the upper stem; and the three main branches spring from the ledges left by the recession. Thus the stems diminish in diameter just as they diminish in height. The main branches (falsely placed in the profile over each other to show their relations) have respectively seven, six, five, four, and three arm-bones, like the masts of the stem; these divisions being proportioned in the same subtle manner. From the joints of these, it seems to be the *plan* of the plant that three major and three minor branches should again spring, bearing the flowers: but, in these infinitely complicated members, vegetative nature admits much variety; in the plant from which these measures were taken the full complement appeared only at one of the secondary joints.

The leaf of this plant has five ribs on each side, as its flower generally five masts, arranged with the most exquisite grace of curve; but of lateral proportion I shall rather take illustrations from architecture: the reader will find several in the accounts of the Duomo at Pisa and St. Mark's at Venice, in Chap. V. §§XIV.—XVI. I give these arrangements merely as illustrations, not as precedents: all beautiful proportions are unique, they are not general formulæ.

XXX. The other condition of architectural treatment which we proposed to notice was the abstraction of imitated form. But there is a peculiar difficulty in touching within these narrow limits on such a subject as this, because the abstraction of

which we find examples in existing art, is partly involuntary; and it is a matter of much nicety to determine where it begins to be purposed. In the progress of national as well as of individual mind, the first attempts at imitation are always abstract and incomplete. Greater completion marks the progress of art, absolute completion usually its decline; whence absolute completion of imitative form is often supposed to be in itself wrong. But it is not wrong always, only dangerous. Let us endeavor briefly to ascertain wherein its danger consists, and wherein its dignity.

XXXI. I have said that all art is abstract in its beginnings; that is to say, it expresses only a small number of the qualities of the thing represented. Curved and complex lines are represented by straight and simple ones; interior markings of forms are few, and much is symbolical and conventional. There is a resemblance between the work of a great nation, in this phase, and the work of childhood and ignorance, which, in the mind of a careless observer, might attach something like ridicule to it. The form of a tree on the Ninevite sculptures is much like that which, some twenty years ago, was familiar upon samplers; and the types of the face and figure in early Italian art are susceptible of easy caricature. On the signs which separate the infancy of magnificent manhood from every other, I do not pause to insist (they consist entirely in the choice of the symbol and of the features abstracted); but I pass to the next stage of art, a condition of strength in which the abstraction which was begun in incapability is continued in free will. This is the case, however, in pure sculpture and painting, as well as in architecture; and we have nothing to do but with that greater severity of manner which fits either to be associated with the more realist art. I believe it properly consists only in a due expression of their subordination, an expression varying according to their place and office. The question is first to be clearly determined whether the architecture is a frame for the sculpture, or the sculpture an ornament of the architecture. If the latter, then the first office of that sculpture is not to represent the things it imitates, but to gather out of them those arrangements of

form which shall be pleasing to the eye in their intended places. So soon as agreeable lines and points of shade have been added to the mouldings which were meagre, or to the lights which were unrelieved, the architectural work of the imitation is accomplished; and how far it shall be wrought towards completeness or not, will depend upon its place, and upon other various circumstances. If, in its particular use or position, it is symmetrically arranged, there is, of course, an instant indication of architectural subjection. But symmetry is not abstraction. Leaves may be carved in the most regular order, and yet be meanly imitative; or, on the other hand, they may be thrown wild and loose, and yet be highly architectural in their separate treatment. Nothing can be less symmetrical than the group of leaves which join the two columns in Plate XIII.; yet, since nothing of the leaf character is given but what is necessary for the bare suggestion of its image and the attainment of the lines desired, their treatment is highly abstract. It shows that the workman only wanted so much of the leaf as he supposed good for his architecture, and would allow no more; and how much is to be supposed good, depends, as I have said, much more on place and circumstance than on general laws. I know that this is not usually thought, and that many good architects would insist on abstraction in all cases: the question is so wide and so difficult that I express my opinion upon it most diffidently; but my own feeling is, that a purely abstract manner, like that of our earliest English work, does not afford room for the perfection of beautiful form, and that its severity is wearisome after the eye has been long accustomed to it. I have not done justice to the Salisbury dog-tooth moulding, of which the effect is sketched in fig. 5, Plate X., but I have done more justice to it nevertheless than to the beautiful French one above it; and I do not think that any candid reader would deny that, piquant and spirited as is that from Salisbury, the Rouen moulding is, in every respect, nobler. It will be observed that its symmetry is more complicated, the leafage being divided into double groups of two lobes each, each lobe of different structure. With exquisite feeling, one of these double groups is

alternately omitted on the other side of the moulding (not seen in the Plate, but occupying the cavetto of the section), thus giving a playful lightness to the whole; and if the reader will allow for a beauty in the flow of the curved outlines (especially on the angle), of which he cannot in the least judge from my rude drawing, he will not, I think, expect easily to find a nobler instance of decoration adapted to the severest mouldings.

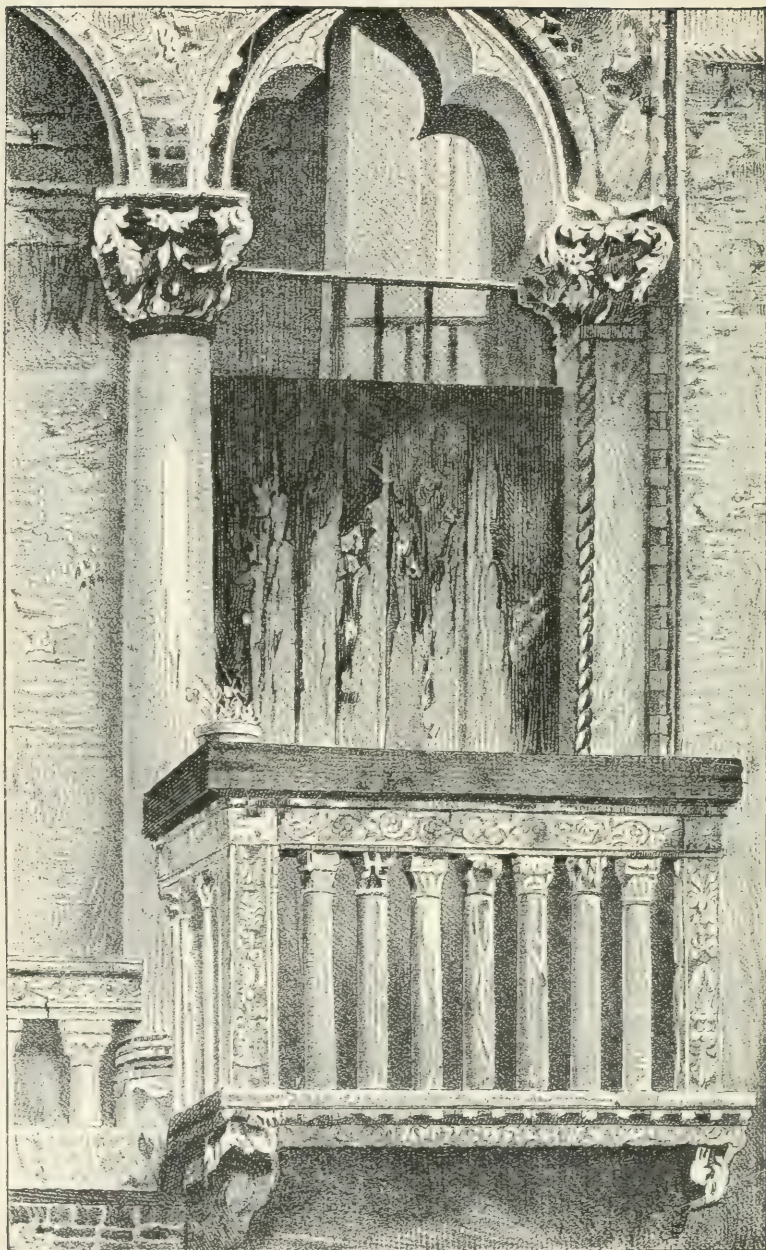
Now it will be observed, that there is in its treatment a high degree of abstraction, though not so conventional as that of Salisbury: that is to say, the leaves have little more than their flow and outline represented; they are hardly undercut, but their edges are connected by a gentle and most studied curve with the stone behind; they have no serrations, no veinings, no rib or stalk on the angle, only an incision gracefully made towards their extremities, indicative of the central rib and depression. The whole style of the abstraction shows that the architect could, if he had chosen, have carried the imitation much farther, but stayed at this point of his own free will; and what he has done is also so perfect in its kind, that I feel disposed to accept his authority without question, so far as I can gather it from his works, on the whole subject of abstraction.

XXXII. Happily his opinion is frankly expressed. This moulding is on the lateral buttress, and on a level with the top of the north gate; it cannot therefore be closely seen except from the wooden stairs of the belfry; it is not intended to be so seen, but calculated for a distance of, at least, forty to fifty feet from the eye. In the vault of the gate itself, half as near again, there are three rows of mouldings, as I think, by the same designer, at all events part of the same plan. One of them is given in Plate I. fig. 2 *a*. It will be seen that the abstraction is here infinitely less; the ivy leaves have stalks and associated fruit, and a rib for each lobe, and are so far undercut as to detach their forms from the stone; while in the vine-leaf moulding above, of the same period, from the south gate, serration appears added to other purely imitative characters. Finally, in the animals which form the ornaments of the portion of the

gate which is close to the eye, abstraction nearly vanishes into perfect sculpture.

XXXIII. Nearness to the eye, however, is not the only circumstance which influences architectural abstraction. These very animals are not merely better cut because close to the eye; they are put close to the eye that they may, without indiscretion, be better cut, on the noble principle, first, I think, clearly enunciated by Mr. Eastlake, that the closest imitation shall be of the noblest object. Farther, since the wildness and manner of growth of vegetation render a *bonâ fide* imitation of it impossible in sculpture—since its members must be reduced in number, ordered in direction, and cut away from their roots, even under the most earnestly imitative treatment,—it becomes a point, as I think, of good judgment, to proportion the completeness of execution of parts to the formality of the whole; and since five or six leaves must stand for a tree, to let also five or six touches stand for a leaf. But since the animal generally admits of perfect outline—since its form is detached, and may be fully represented, its sculpture may be more complete and faithful in all its parts. And this principle will be actually found, I believe, to guide the old workmen. If the animal form be in a gargoyle, incomplete, and coming out of a block of stone, or if a head only, as for a boss or other such partial use, its sculpture will be highly abstract. But if it be an entire animal, as a lizard, or a bird, or a squirrel, peeping among leafage, its sculpture will be much farther carried, and I think, if small, near the eye, and worked in a fine material, may rightly be carried to the utmost possible completion. Surely we cannot wish a less finish bestowed on those which animate the mouldings of the south door of the cathedral of Florence; nor desire that the birds in the capitals of the Doge's palace should be stripped of a single plume.

XXXIV. Under these limitations, then, I think that perfect sculpture may be made a part of the severest architecture; but this perfection was said in the outset to be dangerous. It is so in the highest degree; for the moment the architect allows himself to dwell on the imitated portions, there is a



chance of his losing sight of the duty of his ornament, of its business as a part of the composition, and sacrificing its points of shade and effect to the delight of delicate carving. And then he is lost. His architecture has become a mere framework for the setting of delicate sculpture, which had better be all taken down and put into cabinets. It is well, therefore, that the young architect should be taught to think of imitative ornament as of the extreme of grace in language; not to be regarded at first, not to be obtained at the cost of purpose, meaning, force, or conciseness, yet, indeed, a perfection—the least of all perfections, and yet the crowning one of all—one which by itself, and regarded in itself, is an architectural coxcombry, but is yet the sign of the most highly-trained mind and power when it is associated with others. It is a safe manner, as I think, to design all things at first in severe abstraction, and to be prepared, if need were, to carry them out in that form; then to mark the parts where high finish would be admissible, to complete these always with stern reference to their general effect, and then connect them by a graduated scale of abstraction with the rest. And there is one safeguard against danger in this process on which I would finally insist. Never imitate anything but natural forms, and those the noblest, in the completed parts. The degradation of the cinque cento manner of decoration was not owing to its naturalism, to its faithfulness of imitation, but to its imitation of ugly, i.e. unnatural things. So long as it restrained itself to sculpture of animals and flowers, it remained noble. The balcony, on the opposite page, from a house in the Campo St. Benedetto at Venice, shows one of the earliest occurrences of the cinque cento arabesque, and a fragment of the pattern is given in Plate XII. fig. 8. It is but the arresting upon the stone work of a stem or two of the living flowers, which are rarely wanting in the window above (and which, by the by, the French and Italian peasantry often trellis with exquisite taste about their casements). This arabesque, relieved as it is in darkness from the white stone by the stain of time, is surely both beautiful and pure; and as long as the renaissance ornament re-

mained in such forms it may be beheld with undeserved admiration. But the moment that unnatural objects were associated with these, and armor, and musical instruments, and wild meaningless scrolls and curled shields, and other such fancies, became principal in its subjects, its doom was sealed, and with it that of the architecture of the world.

XXXV. III. Our final inquiry was to be into the use of color as associated with architectural ornament.

I do not feel able to speak with any confidence respecting the touching of *sculpture* with color. I would only note one point, that sculpture is the representation of an idea, while architecture is itself a real thing. The idea may, as I think, be left colorless, and colored by the beholder's mind: but a reality ought to have reality in all its attributes: its color should be as fixed as its form. I cannot, therefore, consider architecture as in any wise perfect without color. Farther, as I have above noticed, I think the colors of architecture should be those of natural stones; partly because more durable, but also because more perfect and graceful. For to conquer the harshness and deadness of tones laid upon stone or on gesso, needs the management and discretion of a true painter; and on this co-operation we must not calculate in laying down rules for general practice. If Tintoret or Giorgione are at hand, and ask us for a wall to paint, we will alter our whole design for their sake, and become their servants; but we must, as architects, expect the aid of the common workman only; and the laying of color by a mechanical hand, and its toning under a vulgar eye, are far more offensive than rudeness in cutting the stone. The latter is imperfection only; the former deadness or discordance. At the best, such color is so inferior to the lovely and mellow hues of the natural stone, that it is wise to sacrifice some of the intricacy of design, if by so doing we may employ the nobler material. And if, as we looked to Nature for instruction respecting form, we look to her also to learn the management of color, we shall, perhaps, find that this sacrifice of intricacy is for other causes expedient.

XXXVI. First, then, I think that in making this refer-

ence we are to consider our building as a kind of organized creature; in coloring which we must look to the single and separately organized creatures of Nature, not to her landscape combinations. Our building, if it is well composed, is one thing, and is to be colored as Nature would color one thing—a shell, a flower, or an animal; not as she colors groups of things.

And the first broad conclusion we shall deduce from observance of natural color in such cases will be, that it never follows form, but is arranged on an entirely separate system. What mysterious connection there may be between the shape of the spots on an animal's skin and its anatomical system, I do not know, nor even if such a connection has in any wise been traced: but to the eye the systems are entirely separate, and in many cases that of color is accidentally variable. The stripes of a zebra do not follow the lines of its body or limbs, still less the spots of a leopard. In the plumage of birds, each feather bears a part of the pattern which is arbitrarily carried over the body, having indeed certain graceful harmonies with the form, diminishing or enlarging in directions which sometimes follow, but also not unfrequently oppose, the directions of its muscular lines. Whatever harmonies there may be, are distinctly like those of two separate musical parts, coinciding here and there only—never discordant, but essentially different. I hold this, then, for the first great principle of architectural color. Let it be visibly independent of form. Never paint a column with vertical lines, but always cross it.¹³ Never give separate mouldings separate colors (I know this is heresy, but I never shrink from any conclusions, however contrary to human authority, to which I am led by observance of natural principles); and in sculptured ornaments I do not paint the leaves or figures (I cannot help the Elgin frieze) of one color and their ground of another, but vary both the ground and the figures with the same harmony. Notice how Nature does it in a variegated flower; not one leaf red and another white, but a point of red and a zone of white, or whatever it may be, to each. In certain places you may run your

two systems closer, and here and there let them be parallel for a note or two, but see that the colors and the forms coincide only as two orders of mouldings do; the same for an instant, but each holding its own course. So single members may sometimes have single colors: as a bird's head is sometimes of one color and its shoulders another, you may make your capital of one color and your shaft another; but in general the best place for color is on broad surfaces, not on the points of interest in form. An animal is mottled on its breast and back, rarely on its paws or about its eyes; so put your variegation boldly on the flat wall and broad shaft, but be shy of it in the capital and moulding; in all cases it is a safe rule to simplify color when form is rich, and vice versâ; and I think it would be well in general to carve all capitals and graceful ornaments in white marble, and so leave them.

XXXVII. Independence then being first secured, what kind of limiting outlines shall we adopt for the system of color itself?

I am quite sure that any person familiar with natural objects will never be surprised at any appearance of care or finish in them. That is the condition of the universe. But there is cause both for surprise and inquiry whenever we see anything like carelessness or incompleteness: that is not a common condition; it must be one appointed for some singular purpose. I believe that such surprise will be forcibly felt by any one who, after studying carefully the lines of some variegated organic form, will set himself to copy with similar diligence those of its colors. The boundaries of the forms he will assuredly, whatever the object, have found drawn with a delicacy and precision which no human hand can follow. Those of its colors he will find in many cases, though governed always by a certain rude symmetry, yet irregular, blotched, imperfect, liable to all kinds of accidents and awkwardnesses. Look at the tracery of the lines on a camp shell, and see how oddly and awkwardly its tents are pitched. It is not indeed always so: there is occasionally, as in the eye of the peacock's plume, an apparent precision, but still a precision far inferior to that of

the drawing of the filaments which bear that lovely stain ; and in the plurality of cases a degree of looseness and variation, and, still more singularly, of harshness and violence in arrangement, is admitted in color which would be monstrous in form. Observe the difference in the precision of a fish's scales and of the spots on them.

XXXVIII. Now, why it should be that color is best seen under these circumstances I will not here endeavor to determine ; nor whether the lesson we are to learn from it be that it is God's will that all manner of delights should never be combined in one thing. But the fact is certain, that color is always by Him arranged in these simple or rude forms, and as certain that, therefore, it must be best seen in them, and that we shall never mend by refining its arrangements. Experience teaches us the same thing. Infinite nonsense has been written about the union of perfect color with perfect form. They never will, never can be united. Color, to be perfect, *must* have a soft outline or a simple one : it cannot have a refined one ; and you will never produce a good painted window with good figure-drawing in it. You will lose perfection of color as you give perfection of line. Try to put in order and form the colors of a piece of opal.

XXXIX. I conclude, then, that all arrangements of color, for its own sake, in graceful forms, are barbarous ; and that, to paint a color pattern with the lovely lines of a Greek leaf moulding, is an utterly savage procedure. I cannot find anything in natural color like this : it is not in the bond. I find it in all natural form—never in natural color. If, then, our architectural color is to be beautiful as its form was, by being imitative, we are limited to these conditions—to simple masses of it, to zones, as in the rainbow and the zebra ; cloudings and flamings, as in marble shells and plumage, or spots of various shapes and dimensions. All these conditions are susceptible of various degrees of sharpness and delicacy, and of complication in arrangement. The zone may become a delicate line, and arrange itself in chequers and zig-zags. The flaming may be more or less defined, as on a tulip leaf, and may at last be

represented by a triangle of color, and arrange itself in stars or other shapes; the spot may be also graduated into a stain, or defined into a square or circle. The most exquisite harmonies may be composed of these simple elements: some soft and full, of flushed and melting spaces of color; others piquant and sparkling, or deep and rich, formed of close groups of the fiery fragments: perfect and lovely proportion may be exhibited in the relation of their quantities, infinite invention in their disposition: but, in all cases, their shape will be effective only as it determines their quantity, and regulates their operation on each other; points or edges of one being introduced between breadths of others, and so on. Triangular and barred forms are therefore convenient, or others the simplest possible; leaving the pleasure of the spectator to be taken in the color, and in that only. Curved outlines, especially if refined, deaden the color, and confuse the mind. Even in figure painting the greatest colorists have either melted their outline away, as often Correggio and Rubens; or purposely made their masses of ungainly shape, as Titian; or placed their brightest hues in costume, where they could get quaint patterns, as Veronese, and especially Angelico, with whom, however, the absolute virtue of color is secondary to grace of line. Hence, he never uses the blended hues of Correggio, like those on the wing of the little Cupid, in the "Venus and Mercury," but always the severest type—the peacock plume. Any of these men would have looked with infinite disgust upon the leafage and scroll-work which form the ground of color in our modern painted windows, and yet all whom I have named were much infected with the love of renaissance designs. We must also allow for the freedom of the painter's subject, and looseness of his associated lines; a pattern being severe in a picture, which is over luxurious upon a building. I believe, therefore, that it is impossible to be over quaint or angular in architectural coloring; and thus many dispositions which I have had occasion to reprobate in form, are, in color, the best that can be invented. I have always, for instance, spoken with contempt of the Tudor style, for this reason, that,

having surrendered all pretence to spaciousness and breadth,—having divided its surfaces by an infinite number of lines, it yet sacrifices the only characters which can make lines beautiful; sacrifices all the variety and grace which long atoned for the caprice of the Flamboyant, and adopts, for its leading feature, an entanglement of cross bars and verticals, showing about as much invention or skill of design as the reticulation of the bricklayer's sieve. Yet this very reticulation would in color be highly beautiful; and all the heraldry, and other features which, in form, are monstrous, may be delightful as themes of color (so long as there are no fluttering or over-twisted lines in them); and this observe, because, when colored, they take the place of a mere pattern, and the resemblance to nature, which could not be found in their sculptured forms, is found in their piquant variegation of other surfaces. There is a beautiful and bright bit of wall painting behind the Duomo of Verona, composed of coats of arms, whose bearings are balls of gold set in bars of green (altered blue?) and white, with cardinal's hats in alternate squares. This is of course, however, fit only for domestic work. The front of the Doge's palace at Venice is the purest and most chaste model that I can name (but one) of the fit application of color to public buildings. The sculpture and mouldings are all white; but the wall surface is chequered with marble blocks of pale rose, the chequers being in no wise harmonized, or fitted to the forms of the windows; but looking as if the surface had been completed first, and the windows cut out of it. In Plate XII. fig. 2 the reader will see two of the patterns used in green and white, on the columns of San Michele of Lucca, every column having a different design. Both are beautiful, but the upper one certainly the best. Yet in sculpture its lines would have been perfectly barbarous, and those even of the lower not enough refined.

XL. Restraining ourselves, therefore, to the use of such simple patterns, so far forth as our color is subordinate either to architectural structure, or sculptural form, we have yet one more manner of ornamentation to add to our general means of

effect, monochrome design, the intermediate condition between coloring and carving. The relations of the entire system of architectural decoration may then be thus expressed.

1. Organic form dominant. True, independent sculpture, and alto-relievo; rich capitals, and mouldings; to be elaborate in completion of form, not abstract, and either to be left in pure white marble, or most cautiously touched with color in points and borders only, in a system *not* concurrent with their forms.
2. Organic form sub-dominant. Basso-relievo or intaglio. To be more abstract in proportion to the reduction of depth; to be also more rigid and simple in contour; to be touched with color more boldly and in an increased degree, exactly in proportion to the reduced depth and fulness of form, but still in a system non-concurrent with their forms.
3. Organic form abstracted to outline. Monochrome design, still farther reduced to simplicity of contour, and therefore admitting for the first time the color to be concurrent with its outlines; that is to say, as its name imports, the entire figure to be detached in one color from a ground of another.
4. Organic forms entirely lost. Geometrical patterns or variable cloudings in the most vivid color.

On the opposite side of this scale, ascending from the color pattern, I would place the various forms of painting which may be associated with architecture: primarily, and as most fit for such purpose, the mosaic, highly abstract in treatment, and introducing brilliant color in masses; the Madonna of Torcello being, as I think, the noblest type of the manner, and the Baptistery of Parma the richest: next, the purely decorative fresco, like that of the Arena Chapel; finally, the fresco becoming principal, as in the Vatican and Sistine. But I cannot, with any safety, follow the principles of abstraction in this pictorial ornament; since the noblest examples of it appear to me to owe their architectural applicability to their

archaic manner; and I think that the abstraction and admirable simplicity which render them fit media of the most splendid coloring, cannot be recovered by a voluntary condescension. The Byzantines themselves would not, I think, if they could have drawn the figure better, have used it for a color decoration; and that use, as peculiar to a condition of childhood, however noble and full of promise, cannot be included among those modes of adornment which are now legitimate or even possible. There is a difficulty in the management of the painted window for the same reason, which has not yet been met, and we must conquer that first, before we can venture to consider the wall as a painted window on a large scale. Pictorial subject, without such abstraction, becomes necessarily principal, or, at all events, ceases to be the architect's concern; its plan must be left to the painter after the completion of the building, as in the works of Veronese and Giorgione on the palaces of Venice.

XLI. Pure architectural decoration, then, may be considered as limited to the four kinds above specified; of which each glides almost imperceptibly into the other. Thus, the Elgin frieze is a monochrome in a state of transition to sculpture, retaining, as I think, the half-cast skin too long. Of pure monochrome, I have given an example in Plate VI., from the noble front of St. Michele of Lucca. It contains forty such arches, all covered with equally elaborate ornaments, entirely drawn by cutting out their ground to about the depth of an inch in the flat white marble, and filling the spaces with pieces of green serpentine; a most elaborate mode of sculpture, requiring excessive care and precision in the fitting of the edges, and of course double work, the same line needing to be cut both in the marble and serpentine. The excessive simplicity of the forms will be at once perceived; the eyes of the figures of animals, for instance, being indicated only by a round dot, formed by a little inlet circle of serpentine, about half an inch over: but, though simple, they admit often much grace of curvature, as in the neck of the bird seen above the right hand pillar.¹⁴ The pieces of serpentine have fallen out in many

places, giving the black shadows, as seen under the horseman's arm and bird's neck, and in the semi-circular line round the arch, once filled with some pattern. It would have illustrated my point better to have restored the lost portions, but I always draw a thing exactly as it is, hating restoration of any kind; and I would especially direct the reader's attention to the completion of the forms in the *sculptured* ornament of the marble cornices, as opposed to the abstraction of the monochrome figures, of the ball and cross patterns between the arches, and of the triangular ornament round the arch on the left.

XLII. I have an intense love for these monochrome figures, owing to their wonderful life and spirit in all the works on which I found them; nevertheless, I believe that the excessive degree of abstraction which they imply necessitates our placing them in the rank of a progressive or imperfect art, and that a perfect building should rather be composed of the highest sculpture (organic form dominant and sub-dominant), associated with pattern colors on the flat or broad surfaces. And we find, in fact, that the cathedral of Pisa, which is a higher type than that of Lucca, exactly follows this condition, the color being put in geometrical patterns on its surfaces, and animal forms and lovely leafage used in the sculptured cornices and pillars. And I think that the grace of the carved forms is best seen when it is thus boldly opposed to severe traceries of color, while the color itself is, as we have seen, always most piquant when it is put into sharp angular arrangements. Thus the sculpture is approved and set off by the color, and the color seen to the best advantage in its opposition both to the whiteness and the grace of the carved marble.

XLIII. In the course of this and the preceding chapters, I have now separately enumerated most of the conditions of Power and Beauty, which in the outset I stated to be the grounds of the deepest impressions with which architecture could affect the human mind; but I would ask permission to recapitulate them in order to see if there be any building which I may offer as an example of the unison, in such manner as is possible, of them all. Glancing back, then, to the beginning of the third

chapter, and introducing in their place the conditions incidentally determined in the two previous sections, we shall have the following list of noble characters :

Considerable size, exhibited by simple terminal lines (Chap. III. § 6). Projection towards the top (§ 7). Breadth of flat surface (§ 8). Square compartments of that surface (§ 9). Varied and visible masonry (§ 11). Vigorous depth of shadow (§ 13), exhibited especially by pierced traceries (§ 18). Varied proportion in ascent (Chap. IV. § 28). Lateral symmetry (§ 28). Sculpture most delicate at the base (Chap. I. § 12). Enriched quantity of ornament at the top (§ 13). Sculpture abstract in inferior ornaments and mouldings (Chap. IV. § 31), complete in animal forms (§ 33). Both to be executed in white marble (§ 40). Vivid color introduced in flat geometrical patterns (§ 39), and obtained by the use of naturally colored stone (§ 35).

These characteristics occur more or less in different buildings, some in one and some in another. But all together, and all in their highest possible relative degrees, they exist, as far as I know, only in one building in the world, the Campanile of Giotto at Florence. The drawing of the tracery of its upper story, which heads this chapter, rude as it is, will nevertheless give the reader some better conception of that tower's magnificence than the thin outlines in which it is usually portrayed. In its first appeal to the stranger's eye there is something unpleasing ; a mingling, as it seems to him, of overseverity with over minuteness. But let him give it time, as he should to all other consummate art. I remember well how, when a boy, I used to despise that Campanile, and think it meanly smooth and finished. But I have since lived beside it many a day, and looked out upon it from my windows by sunlight and moonlight, and I shall not soon forget how profound and gloomy appeared to me the savageness of the Northern Gothic, when I afterwards stood, for the first time, beneath the front of Salisbury. The contrast is indeed strange, if it could be quickly felt, between the rising of those grey walls out of their quiet swarded space, like dark and barren rocks out of a green lake, with their rude, mouldering, rough-grained shafts, and

triple lights, without tracery or other ornament than the martins' nests in the height of them, and that bright, smooth, sunny surface of glowing jasper, those spiral shafts and fairy traceries, so white, so faint, so crystalline, that their slight shapes are hardly traced in darkness on the pallor of the Eastern sky, that serene height of mountain alabaster, colored like a morning cloud, and chased like a sea shell. And if this be, as I believe it, the model and mirror of perfect architecture, is there not something to be learned by looking back to the early life of him who raised it? I said that the Power of human mind had its growth in the Wilderness; much more must the love and the conception of that beauty, whose every line and hue we have seen to be, at the best, a faded image of God's daily work, and an arrested ray of some star of creation, be given chiefly in the places which He has gladdened by planting there the fir tree and the pine. Not within the walls of Florence, but among the far away fields of her lilies, was the child trained who was to raise that headstone of Beauty above the towers of watch and war. Remember all that he became; count the sacred thoughts with which he filled the heart of Italy; ask those who followed him what they learned at his feet; and when you have numbered his labors, and received their testimony, if it seem to you that God had verily poured out upon this His servant no common nor restrained portion of His Spirit, and that he was indeed a king among the children of men, remember also that the legend upon his crown was that of David's:—"I took thee from the sheepcote, and from following the sheep."

CHAPTER V.

THE LAMP OF LIFE.

I. AMONG the countless analogies by which the nature and relations of the human soul are illustrated in the material creation, none are more striking than the impressions inseparably connected with the active and dormant states of matter. I have elsewhere endeavored to show, that no inconsiderable part of the essential characters of Beauty depended on the expression of vital energy in organic things, or on the subjection to such energy, of things naturally passive and powerless. I need not here repeat, of what was then advanced, more than the statement which I believe will meet with general acceptance, that things in other respects alike, as in their substance, or uses, or outward forms, are noble or ignoble in proportion to the fulness of the life which either they themselves enjoy, or of whose action they bear the evidence, as sea sands are made beautiful by their bearing the seal of the motion of the waters. And this is especially true of all objects which bear upon them the impress of the highest order of creative life, that is to say, of the mind of man: they become noble or ignoble in proportion to the amount of the energy of that mind which has visibly been employed upon them. But most peculiarly and imperatively does the rule hold with respect to the creations of Architecture, which being properly capable of no other life than this, and being not essentially composed of things pleasant in themselves,—as music of sweet sounds, or painting of fair colors, but of inert substance,—depend, for their dignity and pleasurable-ness in the utmost degree, upon the vivid expression of the intellectual life which has been concerned in their production.

II. Now in all other kind of energies except that of man's mind, there is no question as to what is life, and what is not. Vital sensibility, whether vegetable or animal, may, indeed, be reduced to so great feebleness, as to render its existence a matter of question, but when it is evident at all, it is evident as such: there is no mistaking any imitation or pretence of it for the life itself; no mechanism nor galvanism can take its place; nor is any resemblance of it so striking as to involve even hesitation in the judgment; although many occur which the human imagination takes pleasure in exalting, without for an instant losing sight of the real nature of the dead things it animates; but rejoicing rather in its own excessive life, which puts gesture into clouds, and joy into waves, and voices into rocks.

III. But when we begin to be concerned with the energies of man, we find ourselves instantly dealing with a double creature. Most part of his being seems to have a fictitious counterpart, which it is at his peril if he do not cast off and deny. Thus he has a true and false (otherwise called a living and dead, or a feigned or unfeigned) faith. He has a true and a false hope, a true and a false charity, and, finally, a true and a false life. His true life is like that of lower organic beings, the independent force by which he moulds and governs external things; it is a force of assimilation which converts everything around him into food, or into instruments; and which, however humbly or obediently it may listen to or follow the guidance of superior intelligence, never forfeits its own authority as a judging principle, as a will capable either of obeying or rebelling. His false life is, indeed, but one of the conditions of death or stupor, but it acts, even when it cannot be said to animate, and is not always easily known from the true. It is that life of custom and accident in which many of us pass much of our time in the world; that life in which we do what we have not purposed, and speak what we do not mean, and assent to what we do not understand; that life which is overlaid by the weight of things external to it, and is moulded by them, instead of assimilating them; that, which

instead of growing and blossoming under any wholesome dew, is crystallised over with it, as with hoar frost, and becomes to the true life what an arborescence is to a tree, a candied agglomeration of thoughts and habits foreign to it, brittle, obstinate, and icy, which can neither bend nor grow, but must be crushed and broken to bits, if it stand in our way. All men are liable to be in some degree frost-bitten in this sort; all are partly encumbered and crusted over with idle matter; only, if they have real life in them, they are always breaking this bark away in noble rents, until it becomes, like the black strips upon the birch tree, only a witness of their own inward strength. But, with all the efforts that the best men make, much of their being passes in a kind of dream, in which they indeed move, and play their parts sufficiently, to the eyes of their fellow-dreamers, but have no clear consciousness of what is around them, or within them; blind to the one, insensible to the other, *νοῦτοι*. I would not press the definition into its darker application to the dull heart and heavy ear; I have to do with it only as it refers to the too frequent condition of natural existence, whether of nations or individuals, settling commonly upon them in proportion to their age. The life of a nation is usually, like the flow of a lava stream, first bright and fierce, then languid and covered, at last advancing only by the tumbling over and over of its frozen blocks. And that last condition is a sad one to look upon. All the steps are marked most clearly in the arts, and in Architecture more than in any other; for it, being especially dependent, as we have just said, on the warmth of the true life, is also peculiarly sensible of the hemlock cold of the false; and I do not know anything more oppressive, when the mind is once awakened to its characteristics, than the aspect of a dead architecture. The feebleness of childhood is full of promise and of interest,—the struggle of imperfect knowledge full of energy and continuity,—but to see impotence and rigidity settling upon the form of the developed man; to see the types which once had the die of thought struck fresh upon them, worn flat by over use; to see the shell of the living creature in its adult form,

when its colors are faded, and its inhabitant perished,—this is a sight more humiliating, more melancholy, than the vanishing of all knowledge, and the return to confessed and helpless infancy.

Nay, it is to be wished that such return were always possible. There would be hope if we could change palsy into puerility; but I know not how far we *can* become children again, and renew our lost life. The stirring which has taken place in our architectural aims and interests within these few years, is thought by many to be full of promise: I trust it is, but it has a sickly look to me. I cannot tell whether it be indeed a springing of seed or a shaking among bones; and I do not think the time will be lost which I ask the reader to spend in the inquiry, how far all that we have hitherto ascertained or conjectured to be the best in principle, may be formally practised without the spirit or the vitality which alone could give it influence, value, or delightfulness.

IV. Now, in the first place—and this is rather an important point—it is no sign of deadness in a present art that it borrows or imitates, but only if it borrows without paying interest, or if it imitates without choice. The art of a great nation, which is developed without any acquaintance with nobler examples than its own early efforts furnish, exhibits always the most consistent and comprehensible growth, and perhaps is regarded usually as peculiarly venerable in its self-origination. But there is something to my mind more majestic yet in the life of an architecture like that of the Lombards, rude and infantine in itself, and surrounded by fragments of a nobler art of which it is quick in admiration and ready in imitation, and yet so strong in its own new instincts that it re-constructs and rearranges every fragment that it copies or borrows into harmony with its own thoughts,—a harmony at first disjointed and awkward, but completed in the end, and fused into perfect organisation; all the borrowed elements being subordinated to its own primal, unchanged life. I do not know any sensation more exquisite than the discovering of the evidence of this magnificent struggle into independent existence; the detection

of the borrowed thoughts, nay, the finding of the actual blocks and stones carved by other hands and in other ages, wrought into the new walls, with a new expression and purpose given to them, like the blocks of unsubdued rocks (to go back to our former simile) which we find in the heart of the lava current, great witnesses to the power which has fused all but those calcined fragments into the mass of its homogeneous fire.

V. It will be asked, How is imitation to be rendered healthy and vital? Unhappily, while it is easy to enumerate the signs of life, it is impossible to define or to communicate life; and while every intelligent writer on Art has insisted on the difference between the copying found in an advancing or recedent period, none have been able to communicate, in the slightest degree, the force of vitality to the copyist over whom they might have influence. Yet it is at least interesting, if not profitable, to note that two very distinguishing characters of vital imitation are, its Frankness and its Audacity; its Frankness is especially singular; there is never any effort to conceal the degree of the sources of its borrowing. Raffaele carries off a whole figure from Masaccio, or borrows an entire composition from Perugino, with as much tranquillity and simplicity of innocence as a young Spartan pickpocket; and the architect of a Romanesque basilica gathered his columns and capitals where he could find them, as an ant picks up sticks. There is at least a presumption, when we find this frank acceptance, that there is a sense within the mind of power capable of transforming and renewing whatever it adopts; and too conscious, too exalted, to fear the accusation of plagiarism,—too certain that it can prove, and has proved, its independence, to be afraid of expressing its homage to what it admires in the most open and indubitable way; and the necessary consequence of this sense of power is the other sign I have named—the Audacity of treatment when it finds treatment necessary, the unhesitating and sweeping sacrifice of precedent where precedent becomes inconvenient. For instance, in the characteristic forms of Italian Romanesque, in which the hypaethral portion of the heathen temple was replaced by the towering nave,

and where, in consequence, the pediment of the west front became divided into three portions, of which the central one, like the apex of a ridge of sloping strata lifted by a sudden fault, was broken away from and raised above the wings; there remained at the extremities of the aisles two triangular fragments of pediment, which could not now be filled by any of the modes of decoration adapted for the unbroken space; and the difficulty became greater, when the central portion of the front was occupied by columnar ranges, which could not, without painful abruptness, terminate short of the extremities of the wings. I know not what expedient would have been adopted by architects who had much respect for precedent, under such circumstances, but it certainly would not have been that of the Pisan,—to continue the range of columns into the pedimental space, shortening them to its extremity until the shaft of the last column vanished altogether, and there remained only its *capital* resting in the angle on its basic plinth. I raise no question at present whether this arrangement be graceful or otherwise; I allege it only as an instance of boldness almost without a parallel, casting aside every received principle that stood in its way, and struggling through every discordance and difficulty to the fulfilment of its own instincts.

VI. Frankness, however, is in itself no excuse for repetition, nor Audacity for innovation, when the one is indolent and the other unwise. Nobler and surer signs of vitality must be sought,—signs independent alike of the decorative or original character of the style, and constant in every style that is determinedly progressive.

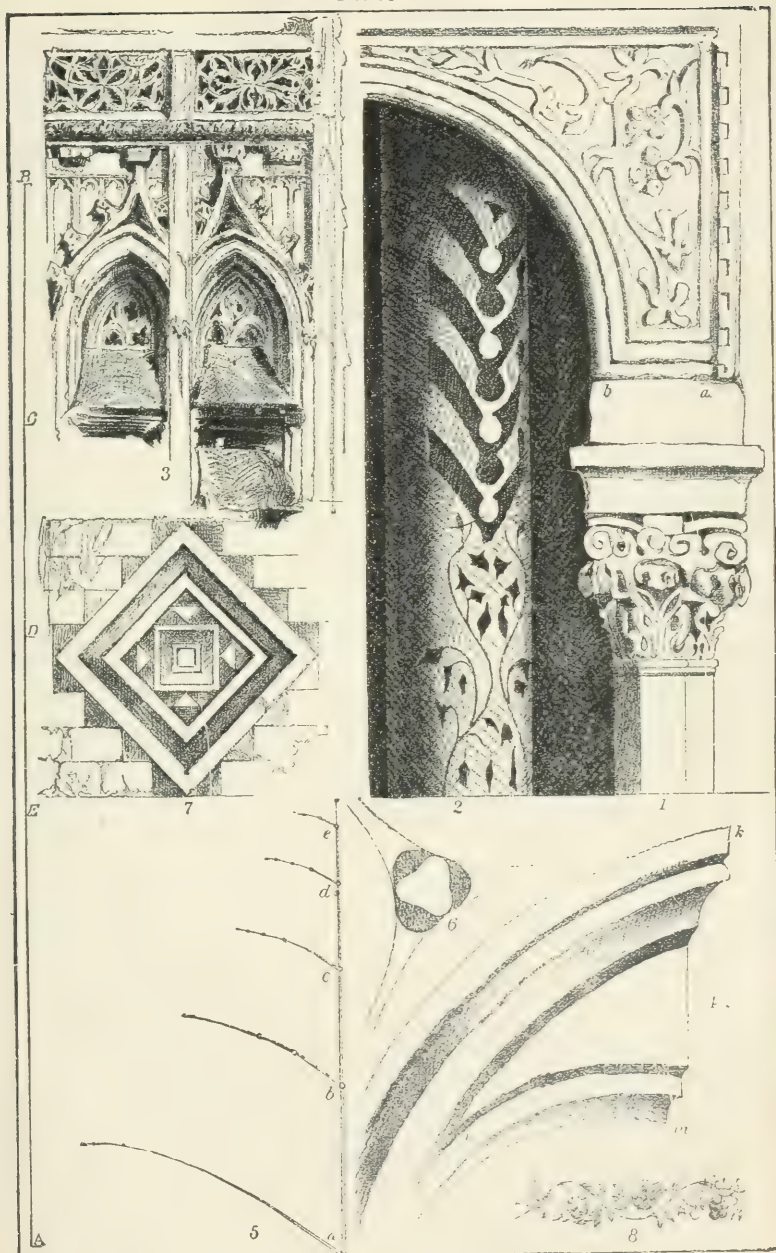
Of these, one of the most important I believe to be a certain neglect or contempt of refinement in execution, or, at all events, a visible subordination of execution to conception, commonly involuntary, but not unfrequently intentional. This is a point, however, on which, while I speak confidently, I must at the same time reservedly and carefully, as there would otherwise be much chance of my being dangerously misunderstood. It has been truly observed and well stated by Lord Lindsay, that the best designers of Italy were also the most

careful in their workmanship; and that the stability and finish of their masonry, mosaic, or other work whatsoever, were always perfect in proportion to the apparent improbability of the great designers condescending to the care of details among us so despised. Not only do I fully admit and re-assert this most important fact, but I would insist upon perfect and most delicate finish in its right place, as a characteristic of all the highest schools of architecture, as much as it is those of painting. But on the other hand, as perfect finish belongs to the perfected art, a progressive finish belongs to progressive art; and I do not think that any more fatal sign of a stupor or numbness settling upon that undeveloped art could possibly be detected, than that it had been *taken aback* by its own execution, and that the workmanship had gone ahead of the design; while, even in my admission of absolute finish in the right place, as an attribute of the perfected school, I must reserve to myself the right of answering in my own way the two very important questions, what *is* finish? and what *is* its right place?

VII. But in illustrating either of these points, we must remember that the correspondence of workmanship with thought is, in existent examples, interfered with by the adoption of the designs of an advanced period by the workmen of a rude one. All the beginnings of Christian architecture are of this kind, and the necessary consequence is of course an increase of the visible interval between the power of realisation and the beauty of the idea. We have at first an imitation, almost savage in its rudeness, of a classical design; as the art advances, the design is modified by a mixture of Gothic grotesqueness, and the execution more complete, until a harmony is established between the two, in which balance they advance to new perfection. Now during the whole period in which the ground is being recovered, there will be found in the living architecture marks not to be mistaken, of intense impatience; a struggle towards something unattained, which causes all minor points of handling to be neglected; and a restless disdain of all qualities which appear either to confess content-

ment or to require a time and care which might be better spent. And, exactly as a good and earnest student of drawing will not lose time in ruling lines or finishing backgrounds about studies which, while they have answered his immediate purpose, he knows to be imperfect and inferior to what he will do hereafter,—so the vigor of a true school of early architecture, which is either working under the influence of high example or which is itself in a state of rapid developement, is very curiously traceable, among other signs, in the contempt of exact symmetry and measurement, which in dead architecture are the most painful necessities.

VIII. In Plate XII. fig. 1 I have given a most singular instance both of rude execution and defied symmetry, in the little pillar and spandril from a pannel decoration under the pulpit of St. Mark's at Venice. The imperfection (not merely simplicity, but actual rudeness and ugliness) of the leaf ornament will strike the eye at once: this is general in works of the time, but it is not so common to find a capital which has been so carelessly cut; its imperfect volutes being pushed up one side far higher than on the other, and contracted on that side, an additional drill hole being put in to fill the space; besides this, the member *a*, of the mouldings, is a roll where it follows the arch, and a flat fillet at *a*; the one being slurred into the other at the angle *b*, and finally stopped short altogether at the other side by the most uncourteous and remorseless interference of the outer moulding; and in spite of all this, the grace, proportion, and feeling of the whole arrangement are so great, that, in its place, it leaves nothing to be desired; all the science and symmetry in the world could not beat it. In fig. 4 I have endeavored to give some idea of the execution of the subordinate portions of a much higher work, the pulpit of St. Andrea at Pistoja, by Nicolo Pisano. It is covered with figure sculptures, executed with great care and delicacy; but when the sculptor came to the simple arch mouldings, he did not choose to draw the eye to them by over precision of work or over sharpness of shadow. The section



adopted, k, m , is peculiarly simple, and so slight and obtuse in its recessions as never to produce a sharp line; and it is worked with what at first appears slovenliness, but it is in fact sculptural *sketching*; exactly correspondent to a painter's light execution of a background: the lines appear and disappear again, are sometimes deep, sometimes shallow, sometimes quite broken off; and the recession of the cusp joins that of the external arch at n , in the most fearless defiance of all mathematical laws of curvilinear contact.

IX. There is something very delightful in this bold expression of the mind of the great master. I do not say that it is the "perfect work" of patience, but I think that impatience is a glorious character in an advancing school; and I love the Romanesque and early Gothic especially, because they afford so much room for it; accidental carelessness of measurement or of execution being mingled undistinguishably with the purposed departures from symmetrical regularity, and the luxuriousness of perpetually variable fancy, which are eminently characteristic of both styles. How great, how frequent they are, and how brightly the severity of architectural law is relieved by their grace and suddenness, has not, I think, been enough observed; still less, the unequal measurements of even important features professing to be absolutely symmetrical. I am not so familiar with modern practice as to speak with confidence respecting its ordinary precision; but I imagine that the following measures of the western front of the cathedral of Pisa, would be looked upon by present architects as very blundering approximations. That front is divided into seven arched compartments, of which the second, fourth or central, and sixth contain doors; the seven are in a most subtle alternating proportion; the central being the largest, next to it the second and sixth, then the first and seventh, lastly the third and fifth. By this arrangement, of course, these three pairs should be equal; and they are so to the eye, but I found their actual measures to be the following, taken from pillar to pillar, in Italian braccia, palmi (four inches each), and inches:—

	Braccia.	Palmi.	Inches.	Total in Inches.
1. Central door.....	8	0	0 =	192
2. Northern door }	6	3	1½ =	157½
3. Southern door }	6	4	3 =	163
4. Extreme northern space }	5	5	3½ =	143½
5. Extreme southern space }	6	1	0½ =	148½
6. Northern intervals between the doors }	5	2	1 =	129
7. Southern intervals between the doors }	5	2	1½ =	129½

There is thus a difference, severally, between 2, 3 and 4, 5, of five inches and a half in the one case, and five inches in the other.

X. This, however, may perhaps be partly attributable to some accommodation of the accidental distortions which evidently took place in the walls of the cathedral during their building, as much as in those of the campanile. To my mind, those of the Duomo are far the most wonderful of the two: I do not believe that a single pillar of its walls is absolutely vertical: the pavement rises and falls to different heights, or rather the plinth of the walls sinks into it continually to different depths, the whole west front literally overhangs (I have not plumbed it; but the inclination may be seen by the eye, by bringing it into visual contact with the upright pilasters of the Campo Santo): and a most extraordinary distortion in the masonry of the southern wall shows that this inclination had begun when the first story was built. The cornice above the first arcade of that wall touches the tops of eleven out of its fifteen arches; but it suddenly leaves the tops of the four westernmost; the arches nodding westward and sinking into the ground, while the cornice rises (or seems to rise), leaving at any rate, whether by the rise of the one or the fall of the other, an interval of more than two feet between it and the top of the western arch, filled by added courses of masonry. There is another very curious evidence of this struggle of the architect with his yielding wall in the columns of the main entrance. (These notices are perhaps somewhat irrelevant to our immediate subject, but they appear to me highly interesting; and they, at all events, prove one of the points on which

I would insist,—how much of imperfection and variety in things professing to be symmetrical the eyes of those eager builders could endure: they looked to loveliness in detail, to nobility in the whole, never to petty measurements.) Those columns of the principal entrance are among the loveliest in Italy; cylindrical, and decorated with a rich arabesque of sculptured foliage, which at the base extends nearly all round them, up to the black pilaster in which they are lightly engaged: but the shield of foliage, bounded by a severe line, narrows to their tops, where it covers their frontal segment only; thus giving, when laterally seen, a terminal line sloping boldly outwards, which, as I think, was meant to conceal the accidental leaning of the western walls, and, by its exaggerated inclination in the same direction, to throw them by comparison into a seeming vertical.

XI. There is another very curious instance of distortion above the central door of the west front. All the intervals between the seven arches are filled with black marble, each containing in its centre a white parallelogram filled with animal mosaics, and the whole surmounted by a broad white band, which, generally, does not touch the parallelogram below. But the parallelogram on the north of the central arch has been forced into an oblique position, and touches the white band; and, as if the architect was determined to show that he did not care whether it did or not, the white band suddenly gets thicker at that place, and remains so over the two next arches. And these differences are the more curious because the workmanship of them all is most finished and masterly, and the distorted stones are fitted with as much neatness as if they tallied to a hair's breadth. There is no look of slurring or blundering about it; it is all coolly filled in, as if the builder had no sense of anything being wrong or extraordinary: I only wish we had a little of his impudence.

XII. Still, the reader will say that all these variations are probably dependent more on the bad foundation than on the architect's feeling. Not so the exquisite delicacies of change in the proportions and dimensions of the apparently symmetri-

cal arcades of the west front. It will be remembered that I said the tower of Pisa was the only ugly tower in Italy, because its tiers were equal, or nearly so, in height; a fault this, so contrary to the spirit of the builders of the time, that it can be considered only as an unlucky caprice. Perhaps the general aspect of the west front of the cathedral may then have occurred to the reader's mind, as seemingly another contradiction of the rule I had advanced. It would not have been so, however, even had its four upper arcades been actually equal; as they are subordinated to the great seven-arched lower story, in the manner before noticed respecting the spire of Salisbury, and as is actually the case in the Duomo of Lucca and Tower of Pistoja. But the Pisan front is far more subtly proportioned. Not one of its four arcades is of like height with another. The highest is the third, counting upwards; and they diminish in nearly arithmetical proportion alternately; in the order 3rd, 1st, 2nd, 4th. The inequalities in their arches are not less remarkable: they at first strike the eye as all equal; but there is a grace about them which equality never obtained: on closer observation, it is perceived that in the first row of nineteen arches, eighteen are equal, and the central one larger than the rest; in the second arcade, the nine central arches stand over the nine below, having, like them, the ninth central one largest. But on their flanks, where is the slope of the shoulder-like pediment, the arches vanish, and a wedge-shaped frieze takes their place, tapering outwards, in order to allow the columns to be carried to the extremity of the pediment: and here, where the heights of the shafts are so far shortened, they are set thicker; five shafts, or rather four and a capital, above, to four of the arcade below, giving twenty-one intervals instead of nineteen. In the next or third arcade,—which, remember, is the highest,—eight arches, all equal, are given in the space of the nine below, so that there is now a central shaft instead of a central arch, and the span of the arches is increased in proportion to their increased height. Finally, in the uppermost arcade, which is the lowest of all, the arches, the same in number as those below, are narrower than any of the façade;

the whole eight going very nearly above the six below them, while the terminal arches of the lower arcade are surmounted by flanking masses of decorated wall with projecting figures.

XIII. Now I call *that* Living Architecture. There is sensation in every inch of it, and an accommodation to every architectural necessity, with a determined variation in arrangement, which is exactly like the related proportions and provisions in the structure of organic form. I have not space to examine the still lovelier proportioning of the external shafts of the apse of this marvellous building. I prefer, lest the reader should think it a peculiar example, to state the structure of another church, the most graceful and grand piece of Romanesque work, as a fragment, in north Italy, that of San Giovanni Evangelista at Pistoja.

The side of that church has three stories of arcade, diminishing in height in bold geometrical proportion, while the arches, for the most part, increase in number in arithmetical, *i. e.* two in the second arcade, and three in the third, to one in the first. Lest, however, this arrangement should be too formal, of the fourteen arches in the lowest series, that which contains the door is made larger than the rest, and is not in the middle, but the sixth from the West, leaving five on one side and eight on the other. Farther: this lowest arcade is terminated by broad flat pilasters, about half the width of its arches; but the arcade above is continuous; only the two extreme arches at the west end are made larger than all the rest, and instead of coming, as they should, into the space of the lower extreme arch, take in both it and its broad pilaster. Even this, however, was not out of order enough to satisfy the architect's eye; for there were still two arches above to each single one below: so at the east end, where there are more arches, and the eye might be more easily cheated, what does he do but *narrow* the two extreme *lower* arches by half a braccio; while he at the same time slightly enlarged the upper ones, so as to get only seventeen upper to nine lower, instead of eighteen to nine. The eye is thus thoroughly confused, and the whole building thrown into one mass, by the curious variations

in the adjustments of the superimposed shafts, not one of which is either exactly in nor positively out of its place; and, to get this managed the more cunningly, there is from an inch to an inch and a half of gradual gain in the space of the four eastern arches, besides the confessed half braccio. Their measures, counting from the east, I found as follows:—

	Braccia.	Palmi.	Inches.
1st.....	3	0	1
2nd.....	3	0	2
3rd.....	3	3	2
4th.....	3	3	3½

The upper arcade is managed on the same principle; it looks at first as if there were three arches to each under pair; but there are, in reality, only thirty-eight (or thirty-seven, I am not quite certain of this number) to the twenty-seven below; and the columns get into all manner of relative positions. Even then, the builder was not satisfied, but must needs carry the irregularity into the spring of the arches, and actually, while the general effect is of a symmetrical arcade, there is not one of the arches the same in height as another; their tops undulate all along the wall like waves along a harbor quay, some nearly touching the string course above, and others falling from it as much as five or six inches.

XIV. Let us next examine the plan of the west front of St. Mark's at Venice, which, though in many respects imperfect, is in its proportions, and as a piece of rich and fantastic color, as lovely a dream as ever filled human imagination. It may, perhaps, interest the reader to hear one opposite opinion upon this subject, and after what has been urged in the preceding pages respecting proportion in general, more especially respecting the wrongness of balanced cathedral towers and other regular designs, together with my frequent references to the Doge's palace, and campanile of St. Mark's, as models of perfection, and my praise of the former especially as projecting above its second arcade, the following extracts from the journal of Wood the architect, written on his arrival

at Venice, may have a pleasing freshness in them, and may show that I have not been stating principles altogether trite or accepted.

"The strange looking church, and the great ugly campanile, could not be mistaken. The exterior of this church surprises you by its extreme ugliness, more than by anything else."

"The Ducal Palace is even more ugly than anything I have previously mentioned. Considered in detail, I can imagine no alteration to make it tolerable; but if this lofty wall had been *set back behind* the two stories of little arches, it would have been a very noble production."

After more observations on "a certain justness of proportion," and on the appearance of riches and power in the church, to which he ascribes a pleasing effect, he goes on: "Some persons are of opinion that irregularity is a necessary part of its excellence. I am decidedly of a contrary opinion, and am convinced that a regular design of the same sort would be far superior. Let an oblong of good architecture, but not very showy, conduct to a fine cathedral, which should appear between *two lofty towers* and have *two obelisks* in front, and on each side of this cathedral let other squares partially open into the first, and one of these extend down to a harbor or sea shore, and you would have a scene which might challenge any thing in existence."

Why Mr. Wood was unable to enjoy the color of St. Mark's, or perceive the majesty of the Ducal Palace, the reader will see after reading the two following extracts regarding the Caracci and Michael Angelo.

"The pictures here (Bologna) are to my taste far preferable to those of Venice, for if the Venetian school surpass in coloring, and, perhaps, in composition, the Bolognese is decidedly superior in drawing and expression, and the Caraccis *shine here like Gods*."

"What is it that is so much admired in this artist (M. Angelo)? Some contend for a grandeur of composition in the lines and disposition of the figures; this, I confess, I do not comprehend; yet, while I acknowledge the beauty of certain forms

and proportions in architecture, I cannot consistently deny that similar merits may exist in painting, though I am unfortunately unable to appreciate them."

I think these passages very valuable, as showing the effect of a contracted knowledge and false taste in painting upon an architect's understanding of his own art; and especially with what curious notions, or lack of notions, about proportion, that art has been sometimes practised. For Mr. Wood is by no means unintelligent in his observations generally, and his criticisms on classical art are often most valuable. But those who love Titian better than the Caracci, and who see something to admire in Michael Angelo, will, perhaps, be willing to proceed with me to a charitable examination of St. Mark's. For, although the present course of European events affords us some chance of seeing the changes proposed by Mr. Wood carried into execution, we may still esteem ourselves fortunate in having first known how it was left by the builders of the eleventh century.

XV. The entire front is composed of an upper and lower series of arches, enclosing spaces of wall decorated with mosaic, and supported on ranges of shafts of which, in the lower series of arches, there is an upper range superimposed on a lower. Thus we have five vertical divisions of the façade; *i.e.* two tiers of shafts, and the arched wall they bear, below; one tier of shafts, and the arched wall they bear above. In order, however, to bind the two main divisions together, the central lower arch (the main entrance) rises above the level of the gallery and balustrade which crown the lateral arches.

The proportioning of the columns and walls of the lower story is so lovely and so varied, that it would need pages of description before it could be fully understood; but it may be generally stated thus: The height of the lower shafts, upper shafts, and wall, being severally expressed by a , b , and c , then $a : c :: c : b$ (a being the highest); and the diameter of shaft b is generally to the diameter of shaft a as height b is to height a , or something less, allowing for the large plinth which diminishes the apparent height of the upper shaft: and when this is their proportion of width, one shaft above is put above one below,

with sometimes another upper shaft interposed: but in the extreme arches a single under shaft bears two upper, proportioned as truly as the boughs of a tree; that is to say, the diameter of each upper = $\frac{2}{3}$ of lower. There being thus the three terms of proportion gained in the lower story, the upper, while it is only divided into two main members, in order that the whole height may not be divided into an even number, has the third term added in its pinnacles. So far of the vertical division. The lateral is still more subtle. There are seven arches in the lower story; and, calling the central arch *a*, and counting to the extremity, they diminish in the alternate order *a, c, b, d*. The upper story has five arches, and two added pinnacles; and these diminish in *regular* order, the central being the largest, and the outermost the least. Hence, while one proportion ascends, another descends, like parts in music; and yet the pyramidal form is secured for the whole, and, which was another great point of attention, none of the shafts of the upper arches stand over those of the lower.

XVI. It might have been thought that, by this plan, enough variety had been secured, but the builder was not satisfied even thus: for—and this is the point bearing on the present part of our subject—always calling the central arch *a*, and the lateral ones *b* and *c* in succession, the northern *b* and *c* are considerably wider than the southern *b* and *c*, but the southern *d* is as much wider than the northern *d*, and lower beneath its cornice besides: and, more than this, I hardly believe that one of the effectively symmetrical members of the façade is actually symmetrical with any other. I regret that I cannot state the actual measures. I gave up the taking them upon the spot, owing to their excessive complexity, and the embarrassment caused by the yielding and subsidence of the arches.

Do not let it be supposed that I imagine the Byzantine workmen to have had these various principles in their minds as they built. I believe they built altogether from feeling, and that it was because they did so, that there is this marvellous life, changefulness, and subtlety running through their every arrangement; and that we reason upon the lovely building as we

should upon some fair growth of the trees of the earth, that know not their own beauty.

XVII. Perhaps, however, a stranger instance than any I have yet given, of the daring variation of pretended symmetry, is found in the front of the Cathedral of Bayeux. It consists of five arches with steep pediments, the outermost filled, the three central with doors; and they appear, at first, to diminish in regular proportion from the principal one in the centre. The two lateral doors are very curiously managed. The tympana of their arches are filled with bas-reliefs, in four tiers; in the lowest tier there is in each a little temple or gate containing the principal figure (in that on the right, it is the gate of Hades with Lucifer). This little temple is carried, like a capital, by an isolated shaft which divides the whole arch at about $\frac{2}{3}$ of its breadth, the larger portion outmost; and in that larger portion is the inner entrance door. This exact correspondence, in the treatment of both gates, might lead us to expect a correspondence in dimension. Not at all. The small inner northern entrance measures, in English feet and inches, 4 ft. 7 in. from jamb to jamb, and the southern five feet exactly. Five inches in five feet is a considerable variation. The outer northern porch measures, from face shaft to face shaft, 13 ft. 11 in., and the southern, 14 ft. 6 in.; giving a difference of 7 in. on 14½ ft. There are also variations in the pediment decorations not less extraordinary.

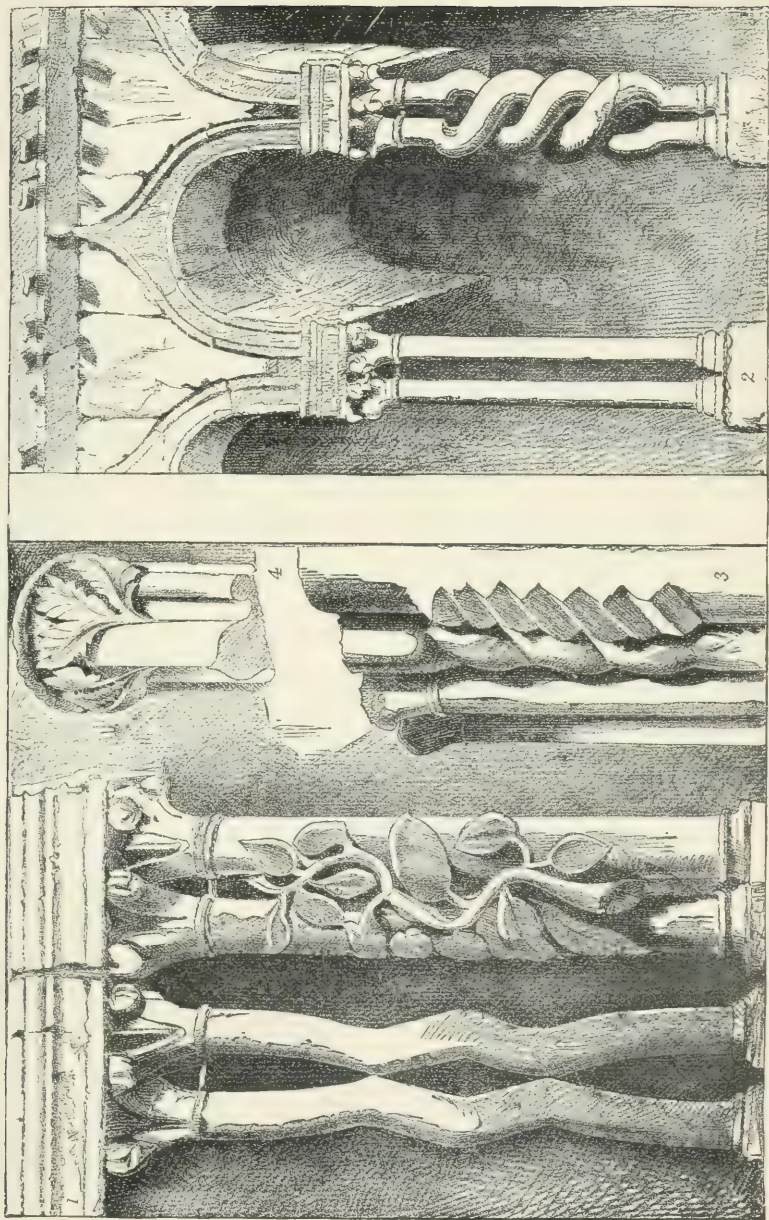
XVIII. I imagine I have given instances enough, though I could multiply them indefinitely, to prove that these variations are not mere blunders, nor carelessnesses, but the result of a fixed scorn, if not dislike, of accuracy in measurements; and, in most cases, I believe, of a determined resolution to work out an effective symmetry by variations as subtle as those of Nature. To what lengths this principle was sometimes carried, we shall see by the very singular management of the towers of Abbeville. I do not say it is right, still less that it is wrong, but it is a wonderful proof of the fearlessness of a living architecture; for, say what we will of it, that Flamboyant of France, however morbid, was as vivid and intense in its animation as

ever any phase of mortal mind; and it would have lived till now, if it had not taken to telling lies. I have before noticed the general difficulty of managing even lateral division, when it is into two equal parts, unless there be some third reconciling member. I shall give, hereafter, more examples of the modes in which this reconciliation is effected in towers with double lights: the Abbeville architect put his sword to the knot perhaps rather too sharply. Vexed by the want of unity between his two windows he literally laid their heads together, and so distorted their oggee curves, as to leave only one of the trefoiled panels above, on the inner side, and three on the outer side of each arch. The arrangement is given in Plate XII. fig. 3. Associated with the various undulation of flamboyant curves below, it is in the real tower hardly observed, while it binds it into one mass in general effect. Granting it, however, to be ugly and wrong, I like sins of the kind, for the sake of the courage it requires to commit them. In plate II. (part of a small chapel attached to the West front of the Cathedral of St. Lo), the reader will see an instance, from the same architecture, of a violation of its own principles for the sake of a peculiar meaning. If there be any one feature which the flamboyant architect loved to decorate richly, it was the niche—it was what the capital is to the Corinthian order; yet in the case before us there is an ugly beehive put in the place of the principal niche of the arch. I am not sure if I am right in my interpretation of its meaning, but I have little doubt that two figures below, now broken away, once represented an Annunciation; and on another part of the same cathedral, I find the descent of the Spirit, encompassed by rays of light, represented very nearly in the form of the niche in question; which appears, therefore, to be intended for a representation of this effulgence, while at the same time it was made a canopy for the delicate figures below. Whether this was its meaning or not, it is remarkable as a daring departure from the common habits of the time.

XIX. Far more splendid is a license taken with the niche decoration of the portal of St. Maclou at Rouen. The subject of the tympanum bas-relief is the Last Judgment, and

the sculpture of the inferno side is carried out with a degree of power whose fearful grotesqueness I can only describe as a mingling of the minds of Orcagna and Hogarth. The demons are perhaps even more awful than Orcagna's; and, in some of the expressions of debased humanity in its utmost despair, the English painter is at least equalled. Not less wild is the imagination which gives fury and fear even to the placing of the figures. An evil angel, poised on the wing, drives the condemned troops from before the Judgment seat; with his left hand he drags behind him a cloud, which he is spreading like a winding-sheet over them all; but they are urged by him so furiously, that they are driven not merely to the extreme limit of that scene, which the sculptor confined elsewhere within the tympanum, but out of the tympanum and *into the niches* of the arch; while the flames that follow them, bent by the blast, as it seems, of the angel's wings, rush into the niches also, and burst up *through their tracery*, the three lowermost niches being represented as all on fire, while, instead of their usual vaulted and ribbed ceiling, there is a demon in the roof of each, with his wings folded over it, grinning down out of the black shadow.

XX. I have, however, given enough instances of vitality shown in mere daring, whether wise, as surely in this last instance, or inexpedient; but, as a single example of the Vitality of Assimilation, the faculty which turns to its purposes all material that is submitted to it, I would refer the reader to the extraordinary columns of the arcade on the south side of the Cathedral of Ferrara. A single arch of it is given in Plate XIII. on the right. Four such arches forming a group, there are interposed two pairs of columns, as seen on the left of the same plate; and then come another four arches. It is a long arcade of, I suppose, not less than forty arches, perhaps of many more; and in the grace and simplicity of its stilted Byzantine curves I hardly know its equal. Its like, in fancy of column, I certainly do not know; there being hardly two correspondent, and the architect having been ready, as it seems, to adopt ideas and resemblances from any sources what-



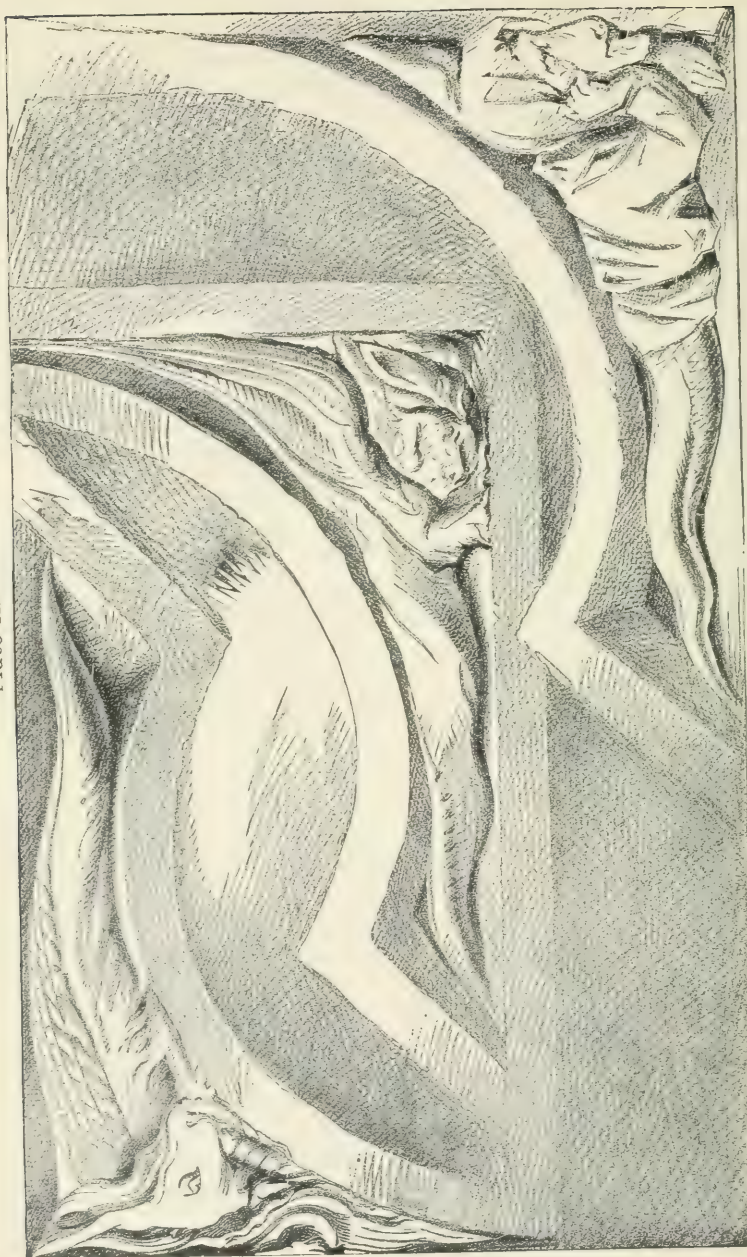
soever. The vegetation growing up the two columns is fine, though bizarre; the distorted pillars beside it suggest images of less agreeable character; the serpentine arrangements founded on the usual Byzantine double knot are generally graceful; but I was puzzled to account for the excessively ugly type of the pillar, fig. 3, one of a group of four. It so happened, fortunately for me, that there had been a fair in Ferrara; and, when I had finished my sketch of the pillar, I had to get out of the way of some merchants of miscellaneous wares, who were removing their stall. It had been shaded by an awning supported by poles, which, in order that the covering might be raised or lowered according to the height of the sun, were composed of two separate pieces, fitted to each other by a *rack*, in which I beheld the prototype of my ugly pillar. It will not be thought, after what I have above said of the inexpedience of imitating anything but natural form, that I advance this architect's practice as altogether exemplary; yet the humility is instructive, which condescended to such sources for motives of thought, the boldness, which could depart so far from all established types of form, and the life and feeling, which out of an assemblage of such quaint and uncouth materials, could produce an harmonious piece of ecclesiastical architecture.

XXI. I have dwelt, however, perhaps, too long upon that form of vitality which is known almost as much by its errors as by its atonements for them. We must briefly note the operation of it, which is always right, and always necessary, upon those lesser details, where it can neither be superseded by precedents, nor repressed by proprieties.

I said, early in this essay, that hand-work might always be known from machine-work; observing, however, at the same time, that it was possible for men to turn themselves into machines, and to reduce their labor to the machine level; but so long as men work *as* men, putting their heart into what they do, and doing their best, it matters not how bad workmen they may be, there will be that in the handling which is above all price: it will be plainly seen that some places have been de-

lighted in more than others—that there has been a pause, and a care about them ; and then there will come careless bits, and fast bits ; and here the chisel will have struck hard, and there lightly, and anon timidly ; and if the man's mind as well as his heart went with his work, all this will be in the right places, and each part will set off the other ; and the effect of the whole, as compared with the same design cut by a machine or a lifeless hand, will be like that of poetry well read and deeply felt to that of the same verses jangled by rote. There are many to whom the difference is imperceptible ; but to those who love poetry it is everything—they had rather not hear it at all, than hear it ill read ; and to those who love Architecture, the life and accent of the hand are everything. They had rather not have ornament at all, than see it ill cut—deadly cut, that is. I cannot too often repeat, it is not coarse cutting, it is not blunt cutting, that is necessarily bad ; but it is cold cutting—the look of equal trouble everywhere—the smooth, diffused tranquillity of heartless pains—the regularity of a plough in a level field. The chill is more likely, indeed, to show itself in finished work than in any other—men cool and tire as they complete : and if completeness is thought to be vested in polish, and to be attainable by help of sand paper, we may as well give the work to the engine-lathe at once. But *right* finish is simply the full rendering of the intended impression ; and *high* finish is the rendering of a well intended and vivid impression ; and it is oftener got by rough than fine handling. I am not sure whether it is frequently enough observed that sculpture is not the mere cutting of the *form* of anything in stone ; it is the cutting of the *effect* of it. Very often the true form, in the marble, would not be in the least like itself. The sculptor must paint with his chisel : half his touches are not to realize, but to put power into the form : they are touches of light and shadow ; and raise a ridge, or sink a hollow, not to represent an actual ridge or hollow, but to get a line of light, or a spot of darkness. In a coarse way, this kind of execution is very marked in old French woodwork ; the irises of the eyes of its chimeric monsters being cut boldly in-

Plate XIV.



to holes, which, variously placed, and always dark, give all kinds of strange and startling expressions, averted and askance, to the fantastic countenances. Perhaps the highest examples of this kind of sculpture-painting are the works of Mino da Fiesole; their best effects being reached by strange angular, and seemingly rude, touches of the chisel. The lips of one of the children on the tombs in the church of the Badia, appear only half finished when they are seen close; yet the expression is farther carried and more ineffable, than in any piece of marble I have ever seen, especially considering its delicacy, and the softness of the child-features. In a sterner kind, that of the statues in the sacristy of St. Lorenzo equals it, and there again by incompletion. I know no example of work in which the forms are absolutely true and complete where such a result is attained; in Greek sculptures is not even attempted.

XXII. It is evident that, for architectural appliances, such masculine handling, likely as it must be to retain its effectiveness when higher finish would be injured by time, must always be the most expedient; and as it is impossible, even were it desirable that the highest finish should be given to the quantity of work which covers a large building, it will be understood how precious the intelligence must become, which renders incompletion itself a means of additional expression; and how great must be the difference, when the touches are rude and few, between those of a careless and those of a regardful mind. It is not easy to retain anything of their character in a copy; yet the reader will find one or two illustrative points in the examples, given in Plate XIV., from the bas-reliefs of the north of Rouen Cathedral. There are three square pedestals under the three main niches on each side of it, and one in the centre; each of these being on two sides decorated with five quatrefoiled panels. There are thus seventy quatrefoils in the lower ornament of the gate alone, without counting those of the outer course round it, and of the pedestals outside: each quatrefoil is filled with a bas-relief, the whole reaching to something above a man's height. A modern architect would, of course, have made all the five

quatrefoils of each pedestal-side equal : not so the Mediæval. The general form being apparently a quatrefoil composed of semicircles on the sides of a square, it will be found on examination that none of the arcs are semicircles, and none of the basic figures squares. The latter are rhomboids, having their acute or obtuse angles uppermost according to their larger or smaller size ; and the arcs upon their sides slide into such places as they can get in the angles of the enclosing parallelogram, leaving intervals, at each of the four angles, of various shapes, which are filled each by an animal. The size of the whole panel being thus varied, the two lowest of the five are tall, the next two short, and the uppermost a little higher than the lowest ; while in the course of bas-reliefs which surrounds the gate, calling either of the two lowest (which are equal), *a*, and either of the next two *b*, and the fifth and sixth *c* and *d*, then *d* (the largest) : *c* :: *c* : *a* :: *a* : *b*. It is wonderful how much of the grace of the whole depends on these variations.

XXIII. Each of the angles, it was said, is filled by an animal. There are thus $70 \times 4 = 280$ animals, all different, in the mere fillings of the intervals of the bas-reliefs. Three of these intervals, with their beasts, actual size, the curves being traced upon the stone, I have given in Plate XIV.

I say nothing of their general design, or of the lines of the wings and scales, which are perhaps, unless in those of the central dragon, not much above the usual commonplaces of good ornamental work ; but there is an evidence in the features of thoughtfulness and fancy which is not common, at least now-a-days. The upper creature on the left is biting something, the form of which is hardly traceable in the defaced stone—but biting he is ; and the reader cannot but recognise in the peculiarly reverted eye the expression which is never seen, as I think, but in the eye of a dog gnawing something in jest, and preparing to start away with it : the meaning of the glance, so far as it can be marked by the mere incision of the chisel, will be felt by comparing it with the eye of the couchant figure on the right, in its gloomy and angry brooding. The plan of this head, and the nod of the cap over its

brow, are fine ; but there is a little touch above the hand especially well meant : the fellow is vexed and puzzled in his malice ; and his hand is pressed hard on his cheek bone, and the flesh of the cheek is *wrinkled* under the eye by the pressure. The whole, indeed, looks wretchedly coarse, when it is seen on a scale in which it is naturally compared with delicate figure etchings ; but considering it as a mere filling of an interstice on the outside of a cathedral gate, and as one of more than three hundred (for in my estimate I did not include the outer pedestals), it proves very noble vitality in the art of the time.

XXIV. I believe the right question to ask, respecting all ornament, is simply this : Was it done with enjoyment—was the carver happy while he was about it ? It may be the hardest work possible, and the harder because so much pleasure was taken in it ; but it must have been happy too, or it will not be living. How much of the stone mason's toil this condition would exclude I hardly venture to consider, but the condition is absolute. There is a Gothic church lately built near Rouen, vile enough, indeed, in its general composition, but excessively rich in detail ; many of the details are designed with taste, and all evidently by a man who has studied old work closely. But it is all as dead as leaves in December ; there is not one tender touch, not one warm stroke, on the whole façade. The men who did it hated it, and were thankful when it was done. And so long as they do so they are merely loading your walls with shapes of clay : the garlands of everlastings in Père la Chaise are more cheerful ornaments. You cannot get the feeling by paying for it—money will not buy life. I am not sure even that you can get it by watching or waiting for it. It is true that here and there a workman may be found who has it in him, but he does not rest contented in the inferior work—he struggles forward into an Academician ; and from the mass of available handicraftsmen the power is gone—how recoverable I know not : this only I know, that all expense devoted to sculptural ornament, in the present condition of that power, comes literally under the

head of Sacrifice for the sacrifice's sake, or worse. I believe the only manner of rich ornament that is open to us is the geometrical color-mosaic, and that much might result from our strenuously taking up this mode of design. But, at all events, one thing we have in our power—the doing without machine ornament and cast-iron work. All the stamped metals, and artificial stones, and imitation woods and bronzes, over the invention of which we hear daily exultation—all the short, and cheap, and easy ways of doing that whose difficulty is its honor—are just so many new obstacles in our already encumbered road. They will not make one of us happier or wiser—they will extend neither the pride of judgment nor the privilege of enjoyment. They will only make us shallower in our understandings, colder in our hearts, and feebler in our wits. And most justly. For we are not sent into this world to do any thing into which we cannot put our hearts. We have certain work to do for our bread, and that is to be done strenuously; other work to do for our delight, and that is to be done heartily: neither is to be done by halves or shifts, but with a will; and what is not worth this effort is not to be done at all. Perhaps all that we have to do is meant for nothing more than an exercise of the heart and of the will, and is useless in itself; but, at all events, the little use it has may well be spared if it is not worth putting our hands and our strength to. It does not become our immortality to take an ease inconsistent with its authority, nor to suffer any instruments with which it can dispense, to come between it and the things it rules: and he who would form the creations of his own mind by any other instrument than his own hand, would, also, if he might, give grinding organs to Heaven's angels, to make their music easier. There is dreaming enough, and earthiness enough, and sensuality enough in human existence without our turning the few glowing moments of it into mechanism; and since our life must at the best be but a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away, let it at least appear as a cloud in the height of Heaven, not as the thick darkness that broods over the blast of the Furnace, and rolling of the Wheel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAMP OF MEMORY.

I. AMONG the hours of his life to which the writer looks back with peculiar gratitude, as having been marked by more than ordinary fulness of joy or clearness of teaching, is one passed, now some years ago, near time of sunset, among the broken masses of pine forest which skirt the course of the Ain, above the village of Champagnole, in the Jura. It is a spot which has all the solemnity, with none of the savageness, of the Alps; where there is a sense of a great power beginning to be manifested in the earth, and of a deep and majestic concord in the rise of the long low lines of piny hills; the first utterance of those mighty mountain symphonies, soon to be more loudly lifted and wildly broken along the battlements of the Alps. But their strength is as yet restrained; and the far-reaching ridges of pastoral mountain succeed each other, like the long and sighing swell which moves over quiet waters from some far-off stormy sea. And there is a deep tenderness pervading that vast monotony. The destructive forces and the stern expression of the central ranges are alike withdrawn. No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths of ancient glacier fret the soft Jura pastures; no splintered heaps of ruin break the fair ranks of her forests; no pale, defiled, or furious rivers rend their rude and changeful ways among her rocks. Patiently, eddy by eddy, the clear green streams wind along their well-known beds; and under the dark quietness of the undisturbed pines, there spring up, year by year, such company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. It was Spring time, too; and all were coming forth in clusters crowded for very love; there was room

enough for all, but they crushed their leaves into all manner of strange shapes only to be nearer each other. There was the wood anemone, star after star, closing every now and then into *nebulæ*: and there was the oxalis, troop by troop like virginal processions of the *Mois de Marie*, the dark vertical clefts in the limestone choked up with them as with heavy snow, and touched with ivy on the edges—ivy as light and lovely as the vine; and, ever and anon, a blue gush of violets, and cowslip bells in sunny places; and in the more open ground, the vetch, and comfrey, and mezereon, and the small sapphire buds of the *Polygala Alpina*, and the wild strawberry, just a blossom or two, all showered amidst the golden softness of deep, warm, amber-colored moss. I came out presently on the edge of the ravine: the solemn murmur of its waters rose suddenly from beneath, mixed with the singing of the thrushes among the pine boughs; and, on the opposite side of the valley, walled all along as it was by grey cliffs of limestone, there was a hawk sailing slowly off their brow, touching them nearly with his wings, and with the shadows of the pines flickering upon his plumage from above; but with a fall of a hundred fathoms under his breast, and the curling pools of the green river gliding and glittering dizzily beneath him, their foam globes moving with him as he flew. It would be difficult to conceive a scene less dependent upon any other interest than that of its own secluded and serious beauty; but the writer well remembers the sudden blankness and chill which were cast upon it when he endeavored, in order more strictly to arrive at the sources of its impressiveness, to imagine it, for a moment, a scene in some aboriginal forest of the New Continent. The flowers in an instant lost their light, the river its music¹⁵; the hills became oppressively desolate; a heaviness in the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed, creation is reflected from things more precious in their memories than it, in its renewing. Those ever springing flowers and ever flowing streams had been dyed by

the deep colors of human endurance, valor, and virtue; and the crests of the sable hills that rose against the evening sky received a deeper worship, because their far shadows fell eastward over the iron wall of Joux and the four-square keep of Granson.

II. It is as the centralisation and protectress of this sacred influence, that Architecture is to be regarded by us with the most serious thought. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her. How cold is all history how lifeless all imagery, compared to that which the living nation writes, and the uncorrupted marble bears! how many pages of doubtful record might we not often spare, for a few stones left one upon another! The ambition of the old Babel builders was well directed for this world: there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, Poetry and Architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality; it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld, all the days of their life. The age of Homer is surrounded with darkness, his very personality with doubt. Not so that of Pericles: and the day is coming when we shall confess, that we have learned more of Greece out of the crumbled fragments of her sculpture than even from her sweet singers or soldier historians. And if indeed there be any profit in our knowledge of the past, or any joy in the thought of being remembered hereafter, which can give strength to present exertion, or patience to present endurance, there are two duties respecting national architecture whose importance it is impossible to overrate; the first, to render the architecture of the day historical; and, the second, to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages.

III. It is in the first of these two directions that Memory may truly be said to be the Sixth Lamp of Architecture; for it is in becoming memorial or monumental that a true perfection is attained by civil and domestic buildings; and this partly as they are, with such a view, built in a more stable manner,

and partly as their decorations are consequently animated by a metaphorical or historical meaning.

As regards domestic buildings, there must always be a certain limitation to views of this kind in the power, as well as in the hearts, of men; still I cannot but think it an evil sign of a people when their houses are built to last for one generation only. There is a sanctity in a good man's house which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruins: and I believe that good men would generally feel this; and that having spent their lives happily and honorably, they would be grieved at the close of them to think that the place of their earthly abode, which had seen, and seemed almost to sympathise in all their honor, their gladness, or their suffering,—that this, with all the record it bore of them, and all of material things that they had loved and ruled over, and set the stamp of themselves upon—was to be swept away, as soon as there was room made for them in the grave; that no respect was to be shown to it, no affection felt for it, no good to be drawn from it by their children; that though there was a monument in the church, there was no warm monument in the heart and house to them; that all that they ever treasured was despised, and the places that had sheltered and comforted them were dragged down to the dust. I say that a good man would fear this; and that, far more, a good son, a noble descendant, would fear doing it to his father's house. I say that if men lived like men indeed, their houses would be temples—temples which we should hardly dare to injure, and in which it would make us holy to be permitted to live; and there must be a strange dissolution of natural affection, a strange unthankfulness for all that homes have given and parents taught, a strange consciousness that we have been unfaithful to our fathers' honor, or that our own lives are not such as would make our dwellings sacred to our children, when each man would fain build to himself, and build for the little revolution of his own life only. And I look upon those pitiful concretions of lime and clay which spring up in mildewed forwardness out of the kneaded fields about our capital—upon those thin, tottering, foundationless shells of splintered wood and imitated

stone—upon those gloomy rows of formalised minuteness, alike without difference and without fellowship, as solitary as similar—not merely with the careless disgust of an offended eye, not merely with sorrow for a desecrated landscape, but with a painful foreboding that the roots of our national greatness must be deeply cankered when they are thus loosely struck in their native ground; that those comfortless and unhonored dwellings are the signs of a great and spreading spirit of popular discontent; that they mark the time when every man's aim is to be in some more elevated sphere than his natural one, and every man's past life is his habitual scorn; when men build in the hope of leaving the places they have built, and live in the hope of forgetting the years that they have lived; when the comfort, the peace, the religion of home have ceased to be felt; and the crowded tenements of a struggling and restless population differ only from the tents of the Arab or the Gipsy by their less healthy openness to the air of heaven, and less happy choice of their spot of earth; by their sacrifice of liberty without the gain of rest, and of stability without the luxury of change.

IV. This is no slight, no consequenceless evil: it is ominous, infectious, and fecund of other fault and misfortune. When men do not love their hearths, nor reverence their thresholds, it is a sign that they have dishonored both, and that they have never acknowledged the true universality of that Christian worship which was indeed to supersede the idolatry, but not the piety, of the pagan. Our God is a household God, as well as a heavenly one; He has an altar in every man's dwelling; let men look to it when they rend it lightly and pour out its ashes. It is not a question of mere ocular delight, it is no question of intellectual pride, or of cultivated and critical fancy, how, and with what aspect of durability and of completeness, the domestic buildings of a nation shall be raised. It is one of those moral duties, not with more impunity to be neglected because the perception of them depends on a finely toned and balanced conscientiousness, to build our dwellings with care, and patience, and fondness, and diligent completion, and with a view to their duration at least for such a period as, in the ordi-

nary course of national revolutions, might be supposed likely to extend to the entire alteration of the direction of local interests. This at the least; but it would be better if, in every possible instance, men built their own houses on a scale commensurate rather with their condition at the commencement, than their attainments at the termination, of their worldly career; and built them to stand as long as human work at its strongest can be hoped to stand; recording to their children what they have been, and from what, if so it had been permitted them, they had risen. And when houses are thus built, we may have that true domestic architecture, the beginning of all other, which does not disdain to treat with respect and thoughtfulness the small habitation as well as the large, and which invests with the dignity of contented manhood the narrowness of worldly circumstance.

V. I look to this spirit of honorable, proud, peaceful self-possession, this abiding wisdom of contented life, as probably one of the chief sources of great intellectual power in all ages, and beyond dispute as the very primal source of the great architecture of old Italy and France. To this day, the interest of their fairest cities depends, not on the isolated richness of palaces, but on the cherished and exquisite decoration of even the smallest tenements of their proud periods. The most elaborate piece of architecture in Venice is a small house at the head of the Grand Canal, consisting of a ground floor with two stories above, three windows in the first, and two in the second. Many of the most exquisite buildings are on the narrower canals, and of no larger dimensions. One of the most interesting pieces of fifteenth century architecture in North Italy, is a small house in a back street, behind the market-place of Vicenza; it bears date 1481, and the motto, *Il n'est. rose. sans. épine*: it has also only a ground floor and two stories, with three windows in each, separated by rich flower-work, and with balconies, supported, the central one by an eagle with open wings, the lateral ones by winged griffins standing on cornucopiæ. The idea that a house must be large in order to be well built, is altogether of modern growth, and is parallel with the idea, that no picture can be historical, except of a size admitting figures larger than life.

VI. I would have, then, our ordinary dwelling-houses built to last, and built to be lovely; as rich and full of pleasantness as may be, within and without; with what degree of likeness to each other in style and manner, I will say presently, under another head; but, at all events, with such differences as might suit and express each man's character and occupation, and partly his history. This right over the house, I conceive, belongs to its first builder, and is to be respected by his children; and it would be well that blank stones should be left in places, to be inscribed with a summary of his life and of its experience, raising thus the habitation into a kind of monument, and developing, into more systematic instructiveness, that good custom which was of old universal, and which still remains among some of the Swiss and Germans, of acknowledging the grace of God's permission to build and possess a quiet resting-place, in such sweet words as may well close our speaking of these things. I have taken them from the front of a cottage lately built among the green pastures which descend from the village of Grindelwald to the lower glacier:—

“Mit herzlichem Vertrauen
 Hat Johannes Mooter und Maria Rubi
 Dieses Haus bauen lassen.
 Der liebe Gott woll uns bewahren
 Vor allem Unglück und Gefahren,
 Und es in Segen lassen stehn
 Auf der Reise durch diese Jammerzeit
 Nach dem himmlischen Paradiese,
 Wo alle Frommen wohnen,
 Da wird Gott sie belohnen
 Mit der Friedenskrone
 Zu alle Ewigkeit.”

VII. In public buildings the historical purpose should be still more definite. It is one of the advantages of Gothic architecture,—I use the word Gothic in the most extended sense as broadly opposed to classical,—that it admits of a richness of record altogether unlimited. Its minute and multitudinous sculptural decorations afford means of expressing, either symbolically or literally, all that need be known of national feeling

or achievement. More decoration will, indeed, be usually required than can take so elevated a character; and much, even in the most thoughtful periods, has been left to the freedom of fancy, or suffered to consist of mere repetitions of some national bearing or symbol. It is, however, generally unwise, even in mere surface ornament, to surrender the power and privilege of variety which the spirit of Gothic architecture admits; much more in important features—capitals of columns or bosses, and string-courses, as of course in all confessed bas-reliefs. Better the rudest work that tells a story or records a fact, than the richest without meaning. There should not be a single ornament put upon great civic buildings, without some intellectual intention. Actual representation of history has in modern times been checked by a difficulty, mean indeed, but steadfast: that of unmanageable costume; nevertheless, by a sufficiently bold imaginative treatment, and frank use of symbols, all such obstacles may be vanquished; not perhaps in the degree necessary to produce sculpture in itself satisfactory, but at all events so as to enable it to become a grand and expressive element of architectural composition. Take, for example, the management of the capitals of the ducal palace at Venice. History, as such, was indeed entrusted to the painters of its interior, but every capital of its arcades was filled with meaning. The large one, the corner stone of the whole, next the entrance, was devoted to the symbolisation of Abstract Justice; above it is a sculpture of the Judgment of Solomon, remarkable for a beautiful subjection in its treatment to its decorative purpose. The figures, if the subject had been entirely composed of them, would have awkwardly interrupted the line of the angle, and diminished its apparent strength; and therefore in the midst of them, entirely without relation to them, and indeed actually between the executioner and interceding mother, there rises the ribbed trunk of a massy tree, which supports and continues the shaft of the angle, and whose leaves above overshadow and enrich the whole. The capital below bears among its leafage a throned figure of Justice, Trajan doing justice to the widow, Aristotle “*che die legge*,” and one or two other sub-

jects now unintelligible from decay. The capitals next in order represent the virtues and vices in succession, as preservative or destructive of national peace and power, concluding with Faith, with the inscription "*Fides optima in Deo est.*" A figure is seen on the opposite side of the capital, worshipping the sun. After these, one or two capitals are fancifully decorated with birds (Plate V.), and then come a series representing, first the various fruits, then the national costumes, and then the animals of the various countries subject to Venetian rule.

VIII. Now, not to speak of any more important public building, let us imagine our own India House adorned in this way, by historical or symbolical sculpture: massively built in the first place; then chased with bas-reliefs of our Indian battles, and fretted with carvings of Oriental foliage, or inlaid with Oriental stones; and the more important members of its decoration composed of groups of Indian life and landscape, and prominently expressing the phantasms of Hindoo worship in their subjection to the Cross. Would not one such work be better than a thousand histories? If, however, we have not the invention necessary for such efforts, or if, which is probably one of the most noble excuses we can offer for our deficiency in such matters, we have less pleasure in talking about ourselves, even in marble, than the Continental nations, at least we have no excuse for any want of care in the points which insure the building's endurance. And as this question is one of great interest in its relations to the choice of various modes of decoration, it will be necessary to enter into it at some length.

IX. The benevolent regards and purposes of men in masses seldom can be supposed to extend beyond their own generation. They may look to posterity as an audience, may hope for its attention, and labor for its praise: they may trust to its recognition of unacknowledged merit, and demand its justice for contemporary wrong. But all this is mere selfishness, and does not involve the slightest regard to, or consideration of, the interest of those by whose numbers we would fain swell the circle of our flatterers, and by whose authority we would gladly support

our presently disputed claims. The idea of self-denial for the sake of posterity, of practising present economy for the sake of debtors yet unborn, of planting forests that our descendants may live under their shade, or of raising cities for future nations to inhabit, never, I suppose, efficiently takes place among publicly recognised motives of exertion. Yet these are not the less our duties; nor is our part fitly sustained upon the earth, unless the range of our intended and deliberate usefulness include not only the companions, but the successors, of our pilgrimage. God has lent us the earth for our life; it is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who are to come after us, and whose names are already written in the book of creation, as to us; and we have no right, by anything that we do or neglect, to involve them in unnecessary penalties, or deprive them of benefits which it was in our power to bequeath. And this the more, because it is one of the appointed conditions of the labor of men that, in proportion to the time between the seed-sowing and the harvest, is the fulness of the fruit; and that generally, therefore, the farther off we place our aim, and the less we desire to be ourselves the witnesses of what we have labored for, the more wide and rich will be the measure of our success. Men cannot benefit those that are with them as they can benefit those who come after them; and of all the pulpits from which human voice is ever sent forth, there is none from which it reaches so far as from the grave.

X. Nor is there, indeed, any present loss, in such respect, for futurity. Every human action gains in honor, in grace, in all true magnificence, by its regard to things that are to come. It is the far sight, the quiet and confident patience, that, above all other attributes, separate man from man, and near him to his **Maker**; and there is no action nor art, whose majesty we may not measure by this test. Therefore, when we build, let us think that we build for ever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone; let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as

they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, "See! this our fathers did for us." For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, or in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. It is in their lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things, in the strength which, through the lapse of seasons and times, and the decline and birth of dynasties, and the changing of the face of the earth, and of the limits of the sea, maintains its sculptured shapeliness for a time insuperable, connects forgotten and following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of nations; it is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and color, and preciousness of architecture; and it is not until a building has assumed this character, till it has been entrusted with the fame, and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering, and its pillars rise out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess of language and of life.

XI. For that period, then, we must build; not, indeed, refusing to ourselves the delight of present completion, nor hesitating to follow such portions of character as may depend upon delicacy of execution to the highest perfection of which they are capable, even although we may know that in the course of years such details must perish; but taking care that for work of this kind we sacrifice no enduring quality, and that the building shall not depend for its impressiveness upon anything that is perishable. This would, indeed, be the law of good composition under any circumstances, the arrangement of the larger masses being always a matter of greater importance than the treatment of the smaller; but in architecture there is much in that very treatment which is skilful or otherwise in proportion to its just regard to the probable effects of time: and

(which is still more to be considered) there is a beauty in those effects themselves, which nothing else can replace, and which it is our wisdom to consult and to desire. For though, hitherto, we have been speaking of the sentiment of age only, there is an actual beauty in the marks of it, such and so great as to have become not unfrequently the subject of especial choice among certain schools of art, and to have impressed upon those schools the character usually and loosely expressed by the term "picturesque." It is of some importance to our present purpose to determine the true meaning of this expression, as it is now generally used; for there is a principle to be developed from that use which, while it has occultly been the ground of much that is true and just in our judgment of art, has never been so far understood as to become definitely serviceable. Probably no word in the language (exclusive of theological expressions), has been the subject of so frequent or so prolonged dispute; yet none remained more vague in their acceptance, and it seems to me to be a matter of no small interest to investigate the essence of that idea which all feel, and (to appearance) with respect to similar things, and yet which every attempt to define has, as I believe, ended either in mere enumeration of the effects and objects to which the term has been attached, or else in attempts at abstraction more palpably nugatory than any which have disgraced metaphysical investigation on other subjects. A recent critic on Art, for instance, has gravely advanced the theory that the essence of the picturesque consists in the expression of "universal decay." It would be curious to see the result of an attempt to illustrate this idea of the picturesque, in a painting of dead flowers and decayed fruit, and equally curious to trace the steps of any reasoning which, on such a theory, should account for the picturesqueness of an ass colt as opposed to a horse foal. But there is much excuse for even the most utter failure in reasonings of this kind, since the subject is, indeed, one of the most obscure of all that may legitimately be submitted to human reason; and the idea is itself so varied in the minds of different men, according to their subjects of study, that no definition

can be expected to embrace more than a certain number of its infinitely multiplied forms.

XII. That peculiar character, however, which separates the picturesque from the characters of subject belonging to the higher walks of art (and this is all that it is necessary for our present purpose to define), may be shortly and decisively expressed. Picturesqueness, in this sense, is *Parasitical Sublimity*. Of course all sublimity, as well as all beauty, is, in the simple etymological sense, picturesque, that is to say, fit to become the subject of a picture; and all sublimity is, even in the peculiar sense which I am endeavoring to develope, picturesque, as opposed to beauty; that is to say, there is more picturesqueness in the subject of Michael Angelo than of Perugino, in proportion to the prevalence of the sublime element over the beautiful. But that character, of which the extreme pursuit is generally admitted to be degrading to art, is *parasitical* sublimity; *i. e.*, a sublimity dependent on the accidents, or on the least essential characters, of the objects to which it belongs; and the picturesque is *developed distinctively exactly in proportion to the distance from the centre of thought of those points of character in which the sublimity is found*. Two ideas, therefore, are essential to picturesqueness,—the first, that of sublimity (for pure beauty is not picturesque at all, and becomes so only as the sublime element mixes with it), and the second, the subordinate or parasitical position of that sublimity. Of course, therefore, whatever characters of line or shade or expression are productive of sublimity, will become productive of picturesqueness; what these characters are I shall endeavor hereafter to show at length; but, among those which are generally acknowledged, I may name angular and broken lines, vigorous oppositions of light and shadow, and grave, deep, or boldly contrasted color; and all these are in a still higher degree effective, when, by resemblance or association, they remind us of objects on which a true and essential sublimity exists, as of rocks or mountains, or stormy clouds or waves. Now if these characters, or any others of a higher and more abstract sublimity, be found in the very heart and substance of

what we contemplate, as the sublimity of Michael Angelo depends on the expression of mental character in his figures far more than even on the noble lines of their arrangement, the art which represents such characters cannot be properly called picturesque: but, if they be found in the accidental or external qualities, the distinctive picturesque will be the result.

XIII. Thus, in the treatment of the features of the human face by Francia or Angelico, the shadows are employed only to make the contours of the features thoroughly felt; and to those features themselves the mind of the observer is exclusively directed (that is to say, to the essential characters of the thing represented). All power and all sublimity rest on these; the shadows are used only for the sake of the features. On the contrary, by Rembrandt, Salvator, or Caravaggio, the features are used *for the sake of the shadows*; and the attention is directed, and the power of the painter addressed to characters of accidental light and shade cast across or around those features. In the case of Rembrandt there is often an essential sublimity in invention and expression besides, and always a high degree of it in the light and shade itself; but it is for the most part parasitical or engrafted sublimity as regards the subject of the painting, and, just so far, picturesque.

XIV. Again, in the management of the sculptures of the Parthenon, shadow is frequently employed as a dark field on which the forms are drawn. This is visibly the case in the metopes, and must have been nearly as much so in the pediment. But the use of that shadow is entirely to show the confines of the figures; and it is to *their lines*, and not to the shapes of the shadows behind them, that the art and the eye are addressed. The figures themselves are conceived as much as possible in full light, aided by bright reflections; they are drawn exactly as, on vases, white figures on a dark ground: and the sculptors have dispensed with, or even struggled to avoid, all shadows which were not absolutely necessary to the explaining of the form. On the contrary, in Gothic sculpture, the shadow becomes itself a subject of thought. It is considered as a dark color, to be arranged in certain agreeable

masses; the figures are very frequently made even subordinate to the placing of its divisions: and their costume is enriched at the expense of the forms underneath, in order to increase the complexity and variety of the points of shade. There are thus, both in sculpture and painting, two, in some sort, opposite schools, of which the one follows for its subject the essential forms of things, and the other the accidental lights and shades upon them. There are various degrees of their contrariety: middle steps, as in the works of Correggio, and all degrees of nobility and of degradation in the several manners: but the one is always recognised as the pure, and the other as the picturesque school. Portions of picturesque treatment will be found in Greek work, and of pure and unpicturesque in Gothic; and in both there are countless instances, as pre-eminently in the works of Michael Angelo, in which shadows become valuable as media of expression, and therefore take rank among essential characteristics. Into these multitudinous distinctions and exceptions I cannot now enter, desiring only to prove the broad applicability of the general definition.

XV. Again, the distinction will be found to exist, not only between forms and shades as subjects of choice, but between essential and inessential forms. One of the chief distinctions between the dramatic and picturesque schools of sculpture is found in the treatment of the hair. By the artists of the time of Pericles it was considered as an excrescence,¹⁶ indicated by few and rude lines, and subordinated in every particular to the principality of the features and person. How completely this was an artistical, not a national idea, it is unnecessary to prove. We need but remember the employment of the Lacedæmonians, reported by the Persian spy on the evening before the battle of Thermopylæ, or glance at any Homeric description of ideal form, to see how purely *sculpturesque* was the law which reduced the markings of the hair, lest, under the necessary disadvantages of material, they should interfere with the distinctness of the personal forms. On the contrary, in later sculpture, the hair receives almost the principal care of the workman; and while the features and limbs are clumsily and bluntly exe-

cut, the hair is curled and twisted, cut into bold and shadowy projections, and arranged in masses elaborately ornamental: there is true sublimity in the lines and the chiaroscuro of these masses, but it is, as regards the creature represented, parasitical, and therefore picturesque. In the same sense we may understand the application of the term to modern animal painting, distinguished as it has been by peculiar attention to the colors, lustre, and texture of skin; nor is it in art alone that the definition will hold. In animals themselves, when their sublimity depends upon their muscular forms or motions, or necessary and principal attributes, as perhaps more than all others in the horse, we do not call them picturesque, but consider them as peculiarly fit to be associated with pure historical subject. Exactly in proportion as their character of sublimity passes into excrescences;—into mane and beard as in the lion, into horns as in the stag, into shaggy hide as in the instance above given of the ass colt, into variegation as in the zebra, or into plumage,—they become picturesque, and are so in art exactly in proportion to the prominence of these excrescencical characters. It may often be most expedient that they should be prominent; often there is in them the highest degree of majesty, as in those of the leopard and boar; and in the hands of men like Tintoret and Rubens, such attributes become means of deepening the very highest and most ideal impressions. But the picturesque direction of their thoughts is always distinctly recognizable, as clinging to the surface, to the less essential character, and as developing out of this a sublimity different from that of the creature itself; a sublimity which is, in a sort, common to all the objects of creation, and the same in its constituent elements, whether it be sought in the clefts and folds of shaggy hair, or in the chasms and rents of rocks, or in the hanging of thickets or hill sides, or in the alternations of gaiety and gloom in the variegation of the shell, the plume, or the cloud.

XVI. Now, to return to our immediate subject, it so happens that, in architecture, the superinduced and accidental beauty is most commonly inconsistent with the preservation of original character, and the picturesque is therefore sought in

ruin, and supposed to consist in decay. Whereas, even when so sought, it consists in the mere sublimity of the rents, or fractures, or stains, or vegetation, which assimilate the architecture with the work of Nature, and bestow upon it those circumstances of color and form which are universally beloved by the eye of man. So far as this is done, to the extinction of the true characters of the architecture, it is picturesque, and the artist who looks to the stem of the ivy instead of the shaft of the pillar, is carrying out in more daring freedom the debased sculptor's choice of the hair instead of the countenance. But so far as it can be rendered consistent with the inherent character, the picturesque or extraneous sublimity of architecture has just this of nobler function in it than that of any other object whatsoever, that it is an exponent of age, of that in which, as has been said, the greatest glory of a building consists; and, therefore, the external signs of this glory, having power and purpose greater than any belonging to their mere sensible beauty, may be considered as taking rank among pure and essential characters; so essential to my mind, that I think a building cannot be considered as in its prime until four or five centuries have passed over it; and that the entire choice and arrangement of its details should have reference to their appearance after that period, so that none should be admitted which would suffer material injury either by the weather-staining, or the mechanical degradation which the lapse of such a period would necessitate.

XVII. It is not my purpose to enter into any of the questions which the application of this principle involves. They are of too great interest and complexity to be even touched upon within my present limits, but this is broadly to be noticed, that those styles of architecture which are picturesque in the sense above explained with respect to sculpture, that is to say, whose decoration depends on the arrangement of points of shade rather than on purity of outline, do not suffer, but commonly gain in richness of effect when their details are partly worn away; hence such styles, pre-eminently that of French Gothic, should always be adopted when the materials to be em-

ployed are liable to degradation, as brick, sandstone, or soft limestone; and styles in any degree dependent on purity of line, as the Italian Gothic, must be practised altogether in hard and undecomposing materials, granite serpentine, or crystalline marbles. There can be no doubt that the nature of the accessible materials influenced the formation of both styles; and it should still more authoritatively determine our choice of either.

XVIII. It does not belong to my present plan to consider at length the second head of duty of which I have above spoken; the preservation of the architecture we possess: but a few words may be forgiven, as especially necessary in modern times. Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word *restoration* understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is *impossible*, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture. That which I have above insisted upon as the life of the whole, that spirit which is given only by the hand and eye of the workman, never can be recalled. Another spirit may be given by another time, and it is then a new building; but the spirit of the dead workman cannot be summoned up, and commanded to direct other hands, and other thoughts. And as for direct and simple copying, it is palpably impossible. What copying can there be of surfaces that have been worn half an inch down? The whole finish of the work was in the half inch that is gone; if you attempt to restore that finish, you do it conjecturally; if you copy what is left, granting fidelity to be possible (and what care, or watchfulness, or cost can secure it?), how is the new work better than the old? There was yet in the old *some* life, some mysterious suggestion of what it had been, and of what it had lost; some sweetness in the gentle lines which rain and sun had wrought. There can be none in the brute hardness of the new carving. Look at the animals which I have given in Plate 14, as an instance

of living work, and suppose the markings of the scales and hair once worn away, or the wrinkles of the brows, and who shall ever restore them? The first step to restoration (I have seen it, and that again and again, seen it on the Baptistery of Pisa, seen it on the Casa d' Oro at Venice, seen it on the Cathedral of Lisieux), is to dash the old work to pieces; the second is usually to put up the cheapest and basest imitation which can escape detection, but in all cases, however careful, and however labored, an imitation still, a cold model of such parts as *can* be modelled, with conjectural supplements; and my experience has as yet furnished me with only one instance, that of the Palais de Justice at Rouen, in which even this, the utmost degree of fidelity which is possible, has been attained or even attempted.

XIX. Do not let us talk then of restoration. The thing is a Lie from beginning to end. You may make a model of a building as you may of a corpse, and your model may have the shell of the old walls within it as your cast might have the skeleton, with what advantage I neither see nor care; but the old building is destroyed, and that more totally and mercilessly than if it had sunk into a heap of dust, or melted into a mass of clay: more has been gleaned out of desolated Nineveh than ever will be out of re-built Milan. But, it is said, there may come a necessity for restoration! Granted. Look the necessity full in the face, and understand it on its own terms. It is a necessity for destruction. Accept it as such, pull the building down, throw its stones into neglected corners, make ballast of them, or mortar, if you will: but do it honestly, and do not set up a Lie in their place. And look that necessity in the face before it comes, and you may prevent it. The principle of modern times (a principle which I believe, at least in France, to be *systematically acted on by the masons*, in order to find themselves work, as the abbey of St. Ouen was pulled down by the magistrates of the town by way of giving work to some vagrants,) is to neglect buildings first, and restore them afterwards. Take proper care of your monuments, and you will not need to restore them. A few sheets of lead put in time upon

the roof, a few dead leaves and sticks swept in time out of a water-course, will save both roof and walls from ruin. Watch an old building with an anxious care ; guard it as best you may, and at *any* cost from every influence of dilapidation. Count its stones as you would jewels of a crown ; set watches about it as if at the gates of a besieged city ; bind it together with iron where it loosens ; stay it with timber where it declines ; do not care about the unsightliness of the aid ; better a crutch than a lost limb ; and do this tenderly, and reverently, and continually, and many a generation will still be born and pass away beneath its shadow. Its evil day must come at last ; but let it come declaredly and openly, and let no dishonoring and false substitute deprive it of the funeral offices of memory.

XX. Of more wanton or ignorant ravage it is vain to speak ; my words will not reach those who commit them, and yet, be it heard or not, I must not leave the truth unstated, that it is again no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. *We have no right whatever to touch them.* They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us. The dead have still their right in them : that which they labored for, the praise of achievement or the expression of religious feeling, or whatsoever else it might be which in those buildings they intended to be permanent, we have no right to obliterate. What we have ourselves built, we are at liberty to throw down ; but what other men gave their strength, and wealth, and life to accomplish, their right over does not pass away with their death ; still less is the right to the use of what they have left vested in us only. It belongs to all their successors. It may hereafter be a subject of sorrow, or a cause of injury, to millions, that we have consulted our present convenience by casting down such buildings as we choose to dispense with. That sorrow, that loss we have no right to inflict. Did the cathedral of Avranches belong to the mob who destroyed it, any more than it did to us, who walk in sorrow to and fro over its foundation ? Neither does any building whatever belong to those mobs who do violence

to it. For a mob it is, and must be always; it matters not whether enraged, or in deliberate folly; whether countless, or sitting in committees; the people who destroy anything causelessly are a mob, and Architecture is always destroyed causelessly. A fair building is necessarily worth the ground it stands upon, and will be so until central Africa and America shall have become as populous as Middlesex; nor is any cause whatever valid as a ground for its destruction. If ever valid, certainly not now when the place both of the past and future is too much usurped in our minds by the restless and discontented present. The very quietness of nature is gradually withdrawn from us; thousands who once in their necessarily prolonged travel were subjected to an influence, from the silent sky and slumbering fields, more effectual than known or confessed, now bear with them even there the ceaseless fever of their life; and along the iron veins that traverse the frame of our country, beat and flow the fiery pulses of its exertions, hotter and faster every hour. All vitality is concentrated through those throbbing arteries into the central cities; the country is passed over like a green sea by narrow bridges, and we are thrown back in continually closer crowds upon the city gates. The only influence which can in any wise *there* take the place of that of the woods and fields, is the power of ancient Architecture. Do not part with it for the sake of the formal square, or of the fenced and planted walk, nor of the goodly street nor opened quay. The pride of a city is not in these. Leave them to the crowd; but remember that there will surely be some within the circuit of the disquieted walls who would ask for some other spots than these wherein to walk; for some other forms to meet their sight familiarly: like him who sat so often where the sun struck from the west, to watch the lines of the dome of Florence drawn on the deep sky, or like those, his Hosts, who could bear daily to behold, from their palace chambers, the places where their fathers lay at rest, at the meeting of the dark streets of Verona.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAMP OF OBEDIENCE.

I. IT has been my endeavor to show in the preceding pages how every form of noble architecture is in some sort the embodiment of the Polity, Life, History, and Religious Faith of nations. Once or twice in doing this, I have named a principle to which I would now assign a definite place among those which direct that embodiment; the last place, not only as that to which its own humility would incline, but rather as belonging to it in the aspect of the crowning grace of all the rest: that principle, I mean, to which Polity owes its stability, Life its happiness, Faith its acceptance, Creation its continuance,—Obedience.

Nor is it the least among the sources of more serious satisfaction which I have found in the pursuit of a subject that at first appeared to bear but slightly on the grave interests of mankind, that the conditions of material perfection which it leads me in conclusion to consider, furnish a strange proof how false is the conception, how frantic the pursuit, of that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty: most treacherous, indeed, of all phantoms; for the feeblest ray of reason might surely show us, that not only its attainment, but its being, was impossible. There is no such thing in the universe. There can never be. The stars have it not; the earth has it not; the sea has it not; and we men have the mockery and semblance of it only for our heaviest punishment.

In one of the noblest poems¹⁷ for its imagery and its music belonging to the recent school of our literature, the writer has sought in the aspect of inanimate nature the expression of that Liberty which, having once loved, he had seen among

men in its true dyes of darkness. But with what strange fallacy of interpretation ! since in one noble line of his invocation he has contradicted the assumptions of the rest, and acknowledged the presence of a subjection, surely not less severe because eternal ? How could he otherwise ? since if there be any one principle more widely than another confessed by every utterance, or more sternly than another imprinted on every atom, of the visible creation, that principle is not Liberty, but Law.

II. The enthusiast would reply that by Liberty he meant the Law of Liberty. Then why use the single and misunderstood word ? If by liberty you mean chastisement of the passions, discipline of the intellect, subjection of the will ; if you mean the fear of inflicting, the shame of committing, a wrong ; if you mean respect for all who are in authority, and consideration for all who are in dependence ; veneration for the good, mercy to the evil, sympathy with the weak ; if you mean watchfulness over all thoughts, temperance in all pleasures, and perseverance in all toils ; if you mean, in a word, that Service which is defined in the liturgy of the English church to be perfect Freedom, why do you name this by the same word by which the luxurious mean license, and the reckless mean change ; by which the rogue means rapine, and the fool, equality, by which the proud mean anarchy, and the malignant mean violence ? Call it by any name rather than this, but its best and truest is, Obedience. Obedience is, indeed, founded on a kind of freedom, else it would become mere subjugation, but that freedom is only granted that obedience may be more perfect ; and thus, while a measure of license is necessary to exhibit the individual energies of things, the fairness and pleasantness and perfection of them all consist in their Restraint. Compare a river that has burst its banks with one that is bound by them, and the clouds that are scattered over the face of the whole heaven with those that are marshalled into ranks and orders by its winds. So that though restraint, utter and unrelaxing, can never be comely, this is not because it is in itself an evil, but only because, when too great, it over-

powers the nature of the thing restrained, and so counteracts the other laws of which that nature is itself composed. And the balance wherein consists the fairness of creation is between the laws of life and being in the things governed and the laws of general sway to which they are subjected; and the suspension or infringement of either kind of law, or, literally, disorder, is equivalent to, and synonymous with, disease; while the increase of both honor and beauty is habitually on the side of restraint (or the action of superior law) rather than of character (or the action of inherent law). The noblest word in the catalogue of social virtue is "Loyalty," and the sweetest which men have learned in the pastures of the wilderness is "Fold."

III. Nor is this all; but we may observe, that exactly in proportion to the majesty of things in the scale of being, is the completeness of their obedience to the laws that are set over them. Gravitation is less quietly, less instantly obeyed by a grain of dust than it is by the sun and moon; and the ocean falls and flows under influences which the lake and river do not recognize. So also in estimating the dignity of any action or occupation of men, there is perhaps no better test than the question "are its laws strait?" For their severity will probably be commensurate with the greatness of the numbers whose labor it concentrates or whose interest it concerns.

This severity must be singular, therefore, in the case of that art, above all others, whose productions are the most vast and the most common; which requires for its practice the co-operation of bodies of men, and for its perfection the perseverance of successive generations. And taking into account also what we have before so often observed of Architecture, her continual influence over the emotions of daily life, and her realism, as opposed to the two sister arts which are in comparison but the picturing of stories and of dreams, we might beforehand expect that we should find her healthy state and action dependent on far more severe laws than theirs: that the license which they extend to the workings of individual mind would be withdrawn by her; and that, in assertion of the relations which she holds with all that is universally important to

man, she would set forth, by her own majestic subjection, some likeness of that on which man's social happiness and power depend. We might, therefore, without the light of experience, conclude, that Architecture never could flourish except when it was subjected to a national law as strict and as minutely authoritative as the laws which regulate religion, policy, and social relations ; nay, even more authoritative than these, because both capable of more enforcement, as over more passive matter ; and needing more enforcement, as the purest type not of one law nor of another, but of the common authority of all. But in this matter experience speaks more loudly than reason. If there be any one condition which, in watching the progress of architecture, we see distinct and general ; if, amidst the counter evidence of success attending opposite accidents of character and circumstance, any one conclusion may be constantly and indisputably drawn, it is this ; that the architecture of a nation is great only when it is as universal and as established as its language ; and when provincial differences of style are nothing more than so many dialects. Other necessities are matters of doubt : nations have been alike successful in their architecture in times of poverty and of wealth ; in times of war and of peace ; in times of barbarism and of refinement ; under governments the most liberal or the most arbitrary ; but this one condition has been constant, this one requirement clear in all places and at all times ; that the work shall be that of a *school*, that no individual caprice shall dispense with, or materially vary, accepted types and customary decorations ; and that from the cottage to the palace, and from the chapel to the basilica, and from the garden fence to the fortress wall, every member and feature of the architecture of the nation shall be as commonly current, as frankly accepted, as its language or its coin.

IV. A day never passes without our hearing our English architects called upon to be original, and to invent a new style : about as sensible and necessary an exhortation as to ask of a man who has never had rags enough on his back to keep out cold, to invent a new mode of cutting a coat. Give him a whole coat first,

and let him concern himself about the fashion of it afterwards. We want no new style of architecture. Who wants a new style of painting or sculpture? But we want *some* style. It is of marvellously little importance, if we have a code of laws and they be good laws, whether they be new or old, foreign or native, Roman or Saxon, or Norman or English laws. But it is of considerable importance that we should have a code of laws of one kind or another, and that code accepted and enforced from one side of the island to another, and not one law made ground of judgment at York and another in Exeter. And in like manner it does not matter one marble splinter whether we have an old or new architecture, but it matters everything whether we have an architecture truly so called or not; that is, whether an architecture whose laws might be taught at our schools from Cornwall to Northumberland, as we teach English spelling and English grammar, or an architecture which is to be invented fresh every time we build a workhouse or a parish school. There seems to me to be a wonderful misunderstanding among the majority of architects at the present day as to the very nature and meaning of Originality, and of all wherein it consists. Originality in expression does not depend on invention of new words; nor originality in poetry on invention of new measures; nor, in painting, on invention of new colors, or new modes of using them. The chords of music, the harmonies of color, the general principles of the arrangement of sculptural masses, have been determined long ago, and, in all probability, cannot be added to any more than they can be altered. Granting that they may be, such additions or alterations are much more the work of time and of multitudes than of individual inventors. We may have one Van Eyck, who will be known as the introducer of a new style once in ten centuries, but he himself will trace his invention to some accidental bye-play or pursuit; and the use of that invention will depend altogether on the popular necessities or instincts of the period. Originality depends on nothing of the kind. A man who has the gift, will take up any style that is going, the style of his day, and will work in that,

and be great in that, and make everything that he does in it look as fresh as if every thought of it had just come down from heaven. I do not say that he will not take liberties with his materials, or with his rules: I do not say that strange changes will not sometimes be wrought by his efforts, or his fancies, in both. But those changes will be instructive, natural, facile, though sometimes marvellous; they will never be sought after as things necessary to his dignity or to his independence; and those liberties will be like the liberties that a great speaker takes with the language, not a defiance of its rules for the sake of singularity; but inevitable, uncalculated, and brilliant consequences of an effort to express what the language, without such infraction, could not. There may be times when, as I have above described, the life of an art is manifested in its changes, and in its refusal of ancient limitations: so there are in the life of an insect; and there is great interest in the state of both the art and the insect at those periods when, by their natural progress and constitutional power, such changes are about to be wrought. But as that would be both an uncomfortable and foolish caterpillar which, instead of being contented with a caterpillar's life and feeding on caterpillar's food, was always striving to turn itself into a chrysalis; and as that would be an unhappy chrysalis which should lie awake at night and roll restlessly in its cocoon, in efforts to turn itself prematurely into a moth; so will that art be unhappy and unprosperous which, instead of supporting itself on the food, and contenting itself with the customs which have been enough for the support and guidance of other arts before it and like it, is struggling and fretting under the natural limitations of its existence, and striving to become something other than it is. And though it is the nobility of the highest creatures to look forward to, and partly to understand the changes which are appointed for them, preparing for them beforehand; and if, as is usual with *appointed* changes, they be into a higher state, even desiring them, and rejoicing in the hope of them, yet it is the strength of every creature, be it changeful or not, to rest for the time being, contented with the con-

ditions of its existence, and striving only to bring about the changes which it desires, by fulfilling to the uttermost the duties for which its present state is appointed and continued.

V. Neither originality, therefore, nor change, good though both may be, and this is commonly a most merciful and enthusiastic supposition with respect to either, are ever to be sought in themselves, or can ever be healthily obtained by any struggle or rebellion against common laws. We want neither the one nor the other. The forms of architecture already known are good enough for us, and for far better than any of us: and it will be time enough to think of changing them for better when we can use them as they are. But there are some things which we not only want, but cannot do without; and which all the struggling and raving in the world, nay more, which all the real talent and resolution in England, will never enable us to do without: and these are Obedience, Unity, Fellowship, and Order. And all our schools of design, and committees of tastes; all our academies and lectures, and journalisms, and essays; all the sacrifices which we are beginning to make, all the truth which there is in our English nature, all the power of our English will, and the life of our English intellect, will in this matter be as useless as efforts and emotions in a dream, unless we are contented to submit architecture and all art, like other things, to English law.

VI. I say architecture and all art; for I believe architecture must be the beginning of arts, and that the others must follow her in their time and order; and I think the prosperity of our schools of painting and sculpture, in which no one will deny the life, though many the health, depends upon that of our architecture. I think that all will languish until that takes the lead, and (this I do not *think*, but I proclaim, as confidently as I would assert the necessity, for the safety of society, of an understood and strongly administered legal government) our architecture *will* languish, and that in the very dust, until the first principle of common sense be manfully obeyed, and an universal system of form and workmanship be everywhere adopted and enforced. It may be said that this is

impossible. It may be so—I fear it is so: I have nothing to do with the possibility or impossibility of it; I simply know and assert the necessity of it. If it be impossible, English art is impossible. Give it up at once. You are wasting time, and money, and energy upon it, and though you exhaust centuries and treasuries, and break hearts for it, you will never raise it above the merest dilettanteism. Think not of it. It is a dangerous vanity, a mere gulph in which genius after genius will be swallowed up, and it will not close. And so it will continue to be, unless the one bold and broad step be taken at the beginning. We shall not manufacture art out of pottery and printed stuffs; we shall not reason out art by our philosophy; we shall not stumble upon art by our experiments, nor create it by our fancies: I do not say that we can even build it out of brick and stone; but there is a chance for us in these, and there is none else; and that chance rests on the bare possibility of obtaining the consent, both of architects and of the public, to choose a style, and to use it universally.

VII. How surely its principles ought at first to be limited, we may easily determine by the consideration of the necessary modes of teaching any other branch of general knowledge. When we begin to teach children writing, we force them to absolute copyism, and require absolute accuracy in the formation of the letters; as they obtain command of the received modes of literal expression, we cannot prevent their falling into such variations as are consistent with their feeling, their circumstances, or their characters. So, when a boy is first taught to write Latin, an authority is required of him for every expression he uses; as he becomes master of the language he may take a license, and feel his right to do so without any authority, and yet write better Latin than when he borrowed every separate expression. In the same way our architects would have to be taught to write the accepted style. We must first determine what buildings are to be considered Augustan in their authority; their modes of construction and laws of proportion are to be studied with the most penetrating care; then the different forms and uses of their decorations

are to be classed and catalogued, as a German grammarian classes the powers of prepositions; and under this absolute, irrefragable authority, we are to begin to work; admitting not so much as an alteration in the depth of a cavetto, or the breadth of a fillet. Then, when our sight is once accustomed to the grammatical forms and arrangements, and our thoughts familiar with the expression of them all; when we can speak this dead language naturally, and apply it to whatever ideas we have to render, that is to say, to every practical purpose of life; then, and not till then, a license might be permitted; and individual authority allowed to change or to add to the received forms, always within certain limits; the decorations, especially, might be made subjects of variable fancy, and enriched with ideas either original or taken from other schools. And thus in process of time and by a great national movement, it might come to pass, that a new style should arise, as language itself changes; we might perhaps come to speak Italian instead of Latin, or to speak modern instead of old English; but this would be a matter of entire indifference, and a matter, besides, which no determination or desire could either hasten or prevent. That alone which it is in our power to obtain, and which it is our duty to desire, is an unanimous style of some kind, and such comprehension and practice of it as would enable us to adapt its features to the peculiar character of every several building, large or small, domestic, civil, or ecclesiastical. I have said that it was immaterial what style was adopted, so far as regards the room for originality which its development would admit: it is not so, however, when we take into consideration the far more important questions of the facility of adaptation to general purposes, and of the sympathy with which this or that style would be popularly regarded. The choice of Classical or Gothic, again using the latter term in its broadest sense, may be questionable when it regards some single and considerable public building; but I cannot conceive it questionable, for an instant, when it regards modern uses in general: I cannot conceive any architect insane enough to project the vulgarization of Greek architecture.

Neither can it be rationally questionable whether we should adopt early or late, original or derivative Gothic: if the latter were chosen, it must be either some impotent and ugly degradation, like our own Tudor, or else a style whose grammatical laws it would be nearly impossible to limit or arrange, like the French Flamboyant. We are equally precluded from adopting styles essentially infantine or barbarous, however Herculean their infancy, or majestic their outlawry, such as our own Norman, or the Lombard Romanesque. The choice would lie I think between four styles:—1. The Pisan Romanesque; 2. The early Gothic of the Western Italian Republics, advanced as far and as fast as our art would enable us to the Gothic of Giotto; 3. The Venetian Gothic in its purest development; 4. The English earliest decorated. The most natural, perhaps the safest choice, would be of the last, well fenced from chance of again stiffening into the perpendicular; and perhaps enriched by some mingling of decorative elements from the exquisite decorated Gothic of France, of which, in such cases, it would be needful to accept some well known examples, as the North door of Rouen and the church of St. Urbain at Troyes, for final and limiting authorities on the side of decoration.

VIII. It is almost impossible for us to conceive, in our present state of doubt and ignorance, the sudden dawn of intelligence and fancy, the rapidly increasing sense of power and facility, and, in its *proper sense*, of Freedom, which such wholesome restraint would instantly cause throughout the whole circle of the arts. Freed from the agitation and embarrassment of that liberty of choice which is the cause of half the discomforts of the world; freed from the accompanying necessity of studying all past, present, or even possible styles; and enabled, by concentration of individual, and co-operation of multitudinous energy, to penetrate into the uttermost secrets of the adopted style, the architect would find his whole understanding enlarged, his practical knowledge certain and ready to hand, and his imagination playful and vigorous, as a child's would be within a walled garden, who would sit down and shudder if he were left free in a fenceless plain. How many

and how bright would be the results in every direction of interest, not to the arts merely, but to national happiness and virtue, it would be as difficult to preconceive as it would seem extravagant to state: but the first, perhaps the least, of them would be an increased sense of fellowship among ourselves, a cementing of every patriotic bond of union, a proud and happy recognition of our affection for and sympathy with each other, and our willingness in all things to submit ourselves to every law that would advance the interest of the community; a barrier, also, the best conceivable, to the unhappy rivalry of the upper and middle classes, in houses, furniture, and establishments; and even a check to much of what is as vain as it is painful in the oppositions of religious parties respecting matters of ritual. These, I say, would be the first consequences. Economy increased tenfold, as it would be by the simplicity of practice; domestic comforts uninterfered with by the caprice and mistakes of architects ignorant of the capacities of the styles they use, and all the symmetry and sightliness of our harmonized streets and public buildings, are things of slighter account in the catalogue of benefits. But it would be mere enthusiasm to endeavor to trace them farther. I have suffered myself too long to indulge in the speculative statement of requirements which perhaps we have more immediate and more serious work than to supply, and of feelings which it may be only contingently in our power to recover. I should be unjustly thought unaware of the difficulty of what I have proposed, or of the unimportance of the whole subject as compared with many which are brought home to our interests and fixed upon our consideration by the wild course of the present century. But of difficulty and of importance it is for others to judge. I have limited myself to the simple statement of what, if we desire to have architecture, we must primarily endeavor to feel and do: but then it may not be desirable for us to have architecture at all. There are many who feel it to be so; many who sacrifice much to that end; and I am sorry to see their energies wasted and their lives disquieted in vain. I have stated, therefore, the only ways in which that end is attainable,

without venturing even to express an opinion as to its real desirableness. I have an opinion, and the zeal with which I have spoken may sometimes have betrayed it, but I hold to it with no confidence. I know too well the undue importance which the study that every man follows must assume in his own eyes, to trust my own impressions of the dignity of that of Architecture; and yet I think I cannot be utterly mistaken in regarding it as at least useful in the sense of a National employment. I am confirmed in this impression by what I see passing among the states of Europe at this instant. All the horror, distress, and tumult which oppress the foreign nations, are traceable, among the other secondary causes through which God is working out His will upon them, to the simple one of their not having enough to do. I am not blind to the distress among their operatives; nor do I deny the nearer and visibly active causes of the movement: the recklessness of villany in the leaders of revolt, the absence of common moral principle in the upper classes, and of common courage and honesty in the heads of governments. But these causes themselves are ultimately traceable to a deeper and simpler one: the recklessness of the demagogue, the immorality of the middle class, and the effeminacy and treachery of the noble, are traceable in all these nations to the commonest and most fruitful cause of calamity in households—idleness. We think too much in our benevolent efforts, more multiplied and more vain day by day, of bettering men by giving them advice and instruction. There are few who will take either: the chief thing they need is occupation. I do not mean work in the sense of bread,—I mean work in the sense of mental interest; for those who either are placed above the necessity of labor for their bread, or who will not work although they should. There is a vast quantity of idle energy among European nations at this time, which ought to go into handicrafts; there are multitudes of idle semi-gentlemen who ought to be shoemakers and carpenters; but since they will not be these so long as they can help it, the business of the philanthropist is to find them some other employment than disturbing governments. It is of no use to tell them they

are fools, and that they will only make themselves miserable in the end as well as others: if they have nothing else to do, they will do mischief; and the man who will not work, and who has no means of intellectual pleasure, is as sure to become an instrument of evil as if he had sold himself bodily to Satan. I have myself seen enough of the daily life of the young educated men of France and Italy, to account for, as it deserves, the deepest national suffering and degradation; and though, for the most part, our commerce and our natural habits of industry preserve us from a similar paralysis, yet it would be wise to consider whether the forms of employment which we chiefly adopt or promote, are as well calculated as they might be to improve and elevate us.

We have just spent, for instance, a hundred and fifty millions, with which we have paid men for digging ground from one place and depositing it in another. We have formed a large class of men, the railway navvies, especially reckless, unmanageable, and dangerous. We have maintained besides (let us state the benefits as fairly as possible) a number of iron foundries in an unhealthy and painful employment; we have developed (this is at least good) a very large amount of mechanical ingenuity; and we have, in fine, attained the power of going fast from one place to another. Meantime we have had no mental interest or concern ourselves in the operations we have set on foot, but have been left to the usual vanities and cares of our existence. Suppose, on the other hand, that we had employed the same sums in building beautiful houses and churches. We should have maintained the same number of men, not in driving wheelbarrows, but in a distinctly technical, if not intellectual, employment, and those who were more intelligent among them would have been especially happy in that employment, as having room in it for the development of their fancy, and being directed by it to that observation of beauty which, associated with the pursuit of natural science, at present forms the enjoyment of many of the more intelligent manufacturing operatives. Of mechanical ingenuity, there is, I imagine, at least as much required to build a cathedral as to

cut a tunnel or contrive a locomotive: we should, therefore, have developed as much science, while the artistical element of intellect would have been added to the gain. Meantime we should ourselves have been made happier and wiser by the interest we should have taken in the work with which we were personally concerned; and when all was done, instead of the very doubtful advantage of the power of going fast from place to place, we should have had the certain advantage of increased pleasure in stopping at home.

IX. There are many other less capacious, but more constant, channels of expenditure, quite as disputable in their beneficial tendency; and we are, perhaps, hardly enough in the habit of inquiring, with respect to any particular form of luxury or any customary appliance of life, whether the kind of employment it gives to the operative or the dependant be as healthy and fitting an employment as we might otherwise provide for him. It is not enough to find men absolute subsistence; we should think of the manner of life which our demands necessitate; and endeavor, as far as may be, to make all our needs such as may, in the supply of them, raise, as well as feed, the poor. It is far better to give work which is above the men, than to educate the men to be above their work. It may be doubted, for instance, whether the habits of luxury, which necessitate a large train of men servants, be a wholesome form of expenditure; and more, whether the pursuits which have a tendency to enlarge the class of the jockey and the groom be a philanthropic form of mental occupation. So again, consider the large number of men whose lives are employed by civilized nations in cutting facets upon jewels. There is much dexterity of hand, patience, and ingenuity thus bestowed, which are simply burned out in the blaze of the tiara, without, so far as I see, bestowing any pleasure upon those who wear or who behold, at all compensatory for the loss of life and mental power which are involved in the employment of the workman. He would be far more healthily and happily sustained by being set to carve stone; certain qualities of his mind, for which there is no room in his present

occupation, would develope themselves in the nobler; and I believe that most women would, in the end, prefer the pleasure of having built a church, or contributed to the adornment of a cathedral, to the pride of bearing a certain quantity of adamant on their foreheads.

X. I could pursue this subject willingly, but I have some strange notions about it which it is perhaps wiser not loosely to set down. I content myself with finally reasserting, what has been throughout the burden of the preceding pages, that whatever rank, or whatever importance, may be attributed or attached to their immediate subject, there is at least some value in the analogies with which its pursuit has presented us, and some instruction in the frequent reference of its commonest necessities to the mighty laws, in the sense and scope of which all men are Builders, whom every hour sees laying the stubble or the stone.

I have paused, not once nor twice, as I wrote, and often have checked the course of what might otherwise have been importunate persuasion, as the thought has crossed me, how soon all Architecture may be vain, except that which is not made with hands. There is something ominous in the light which has enabled us to look back with disdain upon the ages among whose lovely vestiges we have been wandering. I could smile when I hear the hopeful exultation of many, at the new reach of worldly science, and vigor of worldly effort; as if we were again at the beginning of days. There is thunder on the horizon as well as dawn. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

NOTES.

1. Page 13. "*With the idolatrous Egyptian.*"—The probability is indeed slight in comparison, but it *is* a probability nevertheless, and one which is daily on the increase. I trust that I may not be thought to underrate the danger of such sympathy, though I speak lightly of the chance of it. I have confidence in the central religious body of the English and Scottish people, as being not only untainted with Romanism, but immoveably adverse to it : and, however strangely and swiftly the heresy of the Protestant and victory of the Papist may seem to be extending among us, I feel assured that there are barriers in the living faith of this nation which neither can overpass. Yet this confidence is only in the ultimate faithfulness of a few, not in the security of the nation from the sin and the punishment of partial apostasy. Both have, indeed, in some sort, been committed and suffered already ; and, in expressing my belief of the close connection of the distress and burden which the mass of the people at present sustain, with the encouragement which, in various directions, has been given to the Papist, do not let me be called superstitious or irrational. No man was ever more inclined than I, both by natural disposition and by many ties of early association, to a sympathy with the principles and forms of the Romanist Church ; and there is much in its discipline which conscientiously, as well as sympathetically, I could love and advocate. But, in confessing this strength of affectionate prejudice, surely I vindicate more respect for my firmly expressed belief, that the entire doctrine and system of that Church is in the fullest sense anti-Christian ; that its lying and idolatrous Power is the darkest plague that ever held com-

mission to hurt the Earth; that all those yearnings for unity and fellowship, and common obedience, which have been the root of our late heresies, are as false in their grounds as fatal in their termination; that we never can have the remotest fellowship with the utterers of that fearful Falsehood, and live; that we have nothing to look to from them but treacherous hostility; and that, exactly in proportion to the sternness of our separation from them, will be not only the spiritual but the temporal blessings granted by God to this country. How close has been the correspondence hitherto between the degree of resistance to Romanism marked in our national acts, and the honor with which those acts have been crowned, has been sufficiently proved in a short essay by a writer whose investigations into the influence of Religion upon the fate of Nations have been singularly earnest and successful—a writer with whom I faithfully and firmly believe that England will never be prosperous again, and that the honor of her arms will be tarnished, and her commerce blighted, and her national character degraded, until the Romanist is expelled from the place which has impiously been conceded to him among her legislators. “Whatever be the lot of those to whom error is an inheritance, woe be to the man and the people to whom it is an adoption. If England, free above all other nations, sustained amidst the trials which have covered Europe, before her eyes, with burning and slaughter, and enlightened by the fullest knowledge of divine truth, shall refuse fidelity to the compact by which those matchless privileges have been given, her condemnation will not linger. She has already made one step full of danger. She has committed the capital error of mistaking that for a purely political question which was a purely religious one. Her foot already hangs over the edge of the precipice. It must be retracted, or the empire is but a name. In the clouds and darkness which seem to be deepening on all human policy—in the gathering tumults of Europe, and the feverish discontents at home—it may be even difficult to discern where the power yet lives to erect the fallen majesty of the constitution once more. But there are mighty means in sincerity; and if no miracle was ever wrought for

the faithless and despairing, the country that will help itself will never be left destitute of the help of Heaven" (Historical Essays, by the Rev. Dr. Croly, 1842). The first of these essays, "England the Fortress of Christianity," I most earnestly recommend to the meditation of those who doubt that a special punishment is inflicted by the Deity upon all national crime, and perhaps, of all such crime, most instantly upon the betrayal on the part of England of the truth and faith with which she has been entrusted.

2. p. 17. "*Not the gift, but the giving.*"—Much attention has lately been directed to the subject of religious art, and we are now in possession of all kinds of interpretations and classifications of it, and of the leading facts of its history. But the greatest question of all connected with it remains entirely unanswered, What good did it do to real religion? There is no subject into which I should so much rejoice to see a serious and conscientious inquiry instituted as this; an inquiry neither undertaken in artistical enthusiasm nor in monkish sympathy, but dogged, merciless, and fearless. I love the religious art of Italy as well as most men, but there is a wide difference between loving it as a manifestation of individual feeling, and looking to it as an instrument of popular benefit. I have not knowledge enough to form even the shadow of an opinion on this latter point, and I should be most grateful to any one who would put it in my power to do so. There are, as it seems to me, three distinct questions to be considered: the first, What has been the effect of external splendor on the genuineness and earnestness of Christian worship? the second, What the use of pictorial or sculptural representation in the communication of Christian historical knowledge, or excitement of affectionate imagination? the third, What the influence of the practice of religious art on the life of the artist?

In answering these inquiries, we should have to consider separately every collateral influence and circumstance; and, by a most subtle analysis, to eliminate the real effect of art from the effects of the abuses with which it was associated. This

could be done only by a Christian; not a man who would fall in love with a sweet color or sweet expression, but who would look for true faith and consistent life as the object of all. It never has been done yet, and the question remains a subject of vain and endless contention between parties of opposite prejudices and temperaments.

3. p. 18. "*To the concealment of what is really good or great.*"—I have often been surprised at the supposition that Romanism, in its present condition, could either patronise art or profit by it. The noble painted windows of St. Maclou at Rouen, and many other churches in France, are entirely blocked up behind the altars by the erection of huge gilded wooden sunbeams, with interspersed cherubs.

4. p. 26. "*With different pattern of traceries in each.*"—I have certainly not examined the seven hundred and four traceries (four to each niche) so as to be sure that none are alike; but they have the aspect of continual variation, and even the roses of the pendants of the small groined niche roofs are all of different patterns.

5. p. 36. "*Its flamboyant traceries of the last and most degraded forms.*"—They are noticed by Mr. Whewell as forming the figure of the fleur-de-lis, always a mark, when in tracery bars, of the most debased flamboyant. It occurs in the central tower of Bayeux, very richly in the buttresses of St. Gervais at Falaise, and in the small niches of some of the domestic buildings at Rouen. Nor is it only the tower of St. Ouen which is overrated. Its nave is a base imitation, in the flamboyant period, of an early Gothic arrangement; the niches on its piers are barbarisms; there is a huge square shaft run through the ceiling of the aisles to support the nave piers, the ugliest excrescence I ever saw on a Gothic building; the traceries of the nave are the most insipid and faded flamboyant; those of the transept clerestory present a singularly distorted condition of perpendicular; even the elaborate door of the south transept

is, for its fine period, extravagant and almost grotesque in its foliation and pendants. There is nothing truly fine in the church but the choir, the light triforium, and tall clerestory, the circle of Eastern chapels, the details of sculpture, and the general lightness of proportion; these merits being seen to the utmost advantage by the freedom of the body of the church from all incumbrance.

6. p. 36. Compare Iliad Σ . l. 219 with Odyssey Ω . l. 5—10.

7. p. 37. "*Does not admit iron as a constructive material.*"—Except in Chaucer's noble temple of Mars.

"And downward from an hill under a bent,
 Ther stood the temple of Mars, armipotent,
 Wrought all of burned stele, of which th' entree
 Was longe and streite, and gastly for to see.
 And thereout came a rage and swiche a vise,
 That it made all the gates for to rise.
 The northern light in at the dore shone,
 For window on the wall ne was ther none,
 Thurgh which men mighten any light discernen
 The dore was all of athamant eterne,
 Yclenched overthwart and ende long
 With yren tough, and for to make it strong,
 Every piler the temple to sustene
 Was tonne-gret, of yren bright and shene."

The Knight's Tale.

There is, by the bye, an exquisite piece of architectural *color* just before:

"And northward, in a turret on the wall
Of alabaster white, and red corall,
 An oratorie riche for to see,
 In worship of Diane of Chastitee."

8. p. 37. "*The Builders of Salisbury.*"—"This way of tying walls together with iron, instead of making them of that substance and form, that they shall naturally poise themselves

upon their buttment, is against the rules of good architecture, not only because iron is corruptible by rust, but because it is fallacious, having unequal veins in the metal, some places of the same bar being three times stronger than others, and yet all sound to appearance." Survey of Salisbury Cathedral in 1668, by Sir C. Wren. For my own part, I think it better work to bind a tower with iron, than to support a false dome by a brick pyramid.

9. p. 53. Plate 3. In this plate, figures 4, 5, and 6, are glazed windows, but fig. 2 is the open light of a belfry tower, and figures 1 and 3 are in triforia, the latter also occurring filled, on the central tower of Coutances.

10. p. 87. "*Ornaments of the transept towers of Rouen.*"—The reader cannot but observe agreeableness, as a mere arrangement of shade, which especially belongs to the "sacred trefoil." I do not think that the element of foliation has been enough insisted upon in its intimate relations with the power of Gothic work. If I were asked what was the most distinctive feature of its perfect style, I should say the Trefoil. It is the very soul of it; and I think the loveliest Gothic is always formed upon simple and bold tracings of it, taking place between the blank lancet arch on the one hand, and the over-charged cinquefoiled arch on the other.

11. p. 88. "*And levelled cusps of stone.*"—The plate represents one of the lateral windows of the third story of the Palazzo Foscari. It was drawn from the opposite side of the Grand Canal, and the lines of its traceries are therefore given as they appear in somewhat distant effect. It shows only segments of the characteristic quatrefoils of the central windows. I found by measurement their construction exceedingly simple. Four circles are drawn in contact within the large circle. Two tangential lines are then drawn to each opposite pair, enclosing the four circles in a hollow cross. An inner circle

struck through the intersections of the circles by the tangents, truncates the cusps.

12. p. 119. "*Into vertical equal parts.*"—Not absolutely so. There are variations partly accidental (or at least compelled by the architect's effort to recover the vertical), between the sides of the stories; and the upper and lower story are taller than the rest. There is, however, an apparent equality between five out of the eight tiers.

13. p. 127. "*Never paint a column with vertical lines.*"—It should be observed, however, that any pattern which gives opponent lines in its parts, may be arranged on lines parallel with the main structure. Thus, rows of diamonds, like spots on a snake's back, or the bones on a sturgeon, are exquisitely applied both to vertical and spiral columns. The loveliest instances of such decoration that I know, are the pillars of the cloister of St. John Lateran, lately illustrated by Mr. Digby Wyatt, in his most valuable and faithful work on antique mosaic.

14. p. 133. On the cover of this volume the reader will find some figure outlines of the same period and character, from the floor of San Miniato at Florence. I have to thank its designer, Mr. W. Harry Rogers, for his intelligent arrangement of them, and graceful adaptation of the connecting arabesque. (Stamp on cloth cover of *London* edition.)

15. p. 164. "*The flowers lost their light, the river its music.*"—Yet not all their light, nor all their music. Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. 1. chap. iv. § 8.

16. p. 177. "*By the artists of the time of Pericles.*"—This subordination was first remarked to me by a friend, whose profound knowledge of Greek art will not, I trust, be reserved always for the advantage of his friends only: Mr. C. Newton, of the British Museum.

17. p. 184. "*In one of the noblest poems.*"—Coleridge's Ode to France:—

"Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
 Whose pathless march no mortal may controul!
 Ye Ocean-Waves! that wheresoe'er ye roll,
 Yield homage only to eternal laws!
 Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds singing,
 Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
 Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
 Have made a solemn music of the wind!
 Where, like a man beloved of God,
 Through glooms, which never woodman trod,
 How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
 Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
 By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
 O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
 And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!
 Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
 Yea, everything that is and will be free!
 Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
 With what deep worship I have still adored
 The spirit of divinest Liberty."

Noble verse, but erring thought: contrast George Herbert's—

"Slight those who say amidst their sickly healths,
 Thou livest by rule. What doth not so but man?
 Houses are built by rule and Commonwealths.
 Entice the trusty sun, if that you can,
 From his ecliptic line; beckon the sky.
 Who lives by rule then, keeps good company."

"Who keeps no guard upon himself is slack,
 And rots to nothing at the next great thaw;
 Man is a shop of rules: a well-truss'd pack
 Whose every parcel underwrites a law.
 Lose not thyself, nor give thy humors way;
 God gave them to thee under lock and key."

THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

JOHN RUSKIN

VOLUME II



MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME I

MODERN PAINTERS.

BY

A GRADUATE OF OXFORD.

VOL. I

PART I...II.

TO
THE LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND

This Work

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE work now laid before the public originated in indignation at the shallow and false criticism of the periodicals of the day on the works of the great living artist to whom it principally refers. It was intended to be a short pamphlet, reprobating the matter and style of those critiques, and pointing out their perilous tendency, as guides of public feeling. But, as point after point presented itself for demonstration, I found myself compelled to amplify what was at first a letter to the Editor of a Review, into something very like a treatise on art, to which I was obliged to give the more consistency and completeness, because it advocated opinions which, to the ordinary connoisseur, will sound heretical. I now scarcely know whether I should announce it is an Essay on Landscape Painting, and apologize for its frequent reference to the works of a particular master; or, announcing it as a critique on particular works, apologize for its lengthy discussion of general principles. But of whatever character the work may be considered, the motives which led me to undertake it must not be mistaken. No zeal for the reputation of any individual, no personal feeling of any kind, has the slightest weight or influence with me. The reputation of the great artist to whose works I have chiefly referred, is established on too legitimate grounds among all whose admiration is honorable, to be in any way affected by the ignorant sarcasms of pretension and affectation. But when *public* taste seems plunging deeper and deeper into degradation day by day, and when the press universally exerts such power as it possesses to direct the feeling of the nation more completely to all that is theatrical, affected, and false in art; while it vents its ribald buffooneries on the most exalted truth, and the highest ideal of landscape, that this or any other age has ever witnessed, it becomes the imperative duty of all who have any perception or

knowledge of what is really great in art, and any desire for its advancement in England, to come fearlessly forward, regardless of such individual interests as are likely to be injured by the knowledge of what is good and right, to declare and demonstrate, wherever they exist, the essence and the authority of the Beautiful and the True.

Whatever may seem invidious or partial in the execution of my task is dependent not so much on the tenor of the work, as on its incompleteness. I have not entered into systematic criticism of all the painters of the present day ; but I have illustrated each particular excellence and truth of art by the works in which it exists in the highest degree, resting satisfied that if it be once rightly felt and enjoyed in these, it will be discovered and appreciated wherever it exists in others. And although I have never suppressed any conviction of the superiority of one artist over another, which I believed to be grounded on truth, and necessary to the understanding of truth, I have been cautious never to undermine positive rank, while I disputed relative rank. My uniform desire and aim have been, not that the present favorite should be admired less, but that the neglected master should be admired more. And I know that an increased perception and sense of truth and beauty, though it may interfere with our estimate of the comparative rank of painters, will invariably tend to increase our admiration of all who are really great ; and he who now places Stanfield and Callcott above Turner, will admire Stanfield and Callcott more than he does now, when he has learned to place Turner far above them both.

In three instances only have I spoken in direct depreciation of the works of living artists, and these are all cases in which the reputation is so firm and extended, as to suffer little injury from the opinion of an individual, and where the blame has been warranted and deserved by the desecration of the highest powers.

Of the old masters I have spoken with far greater freedom ; but let it be remembered that only a portion of the work is now presented to the public, and it must not be supposed, because in that particular portion, and with reference to particular excellencies, I have spoken in constant depreciation, that I have no feeling of other excellencies of which cognizance can only be taken in future parts of the work. Let me not be understood to mean more than I have said, nor be made responsible for con-

clusions when I have only stated facts. I have said that the old masters did not give the truth of Nature ; if the reader chooses, thence, to infer that they were not masters at all, it is his conclusion, not mine.

Whatever I have asserted throughout the work, I have endeavored to ground altogether on demonstrations which must stand or fall by their own strength, and which ought to involve no more reference to authority or character than a demonstration in Euclid. Yet it is proper for the public to know, that the writer is no mere theorist, but has been devoted from his youth to the laborious study of practical art.

Whatever has been generally affirmed of the old schools of landscape-painting is founded on familiar acquaintance with every important work of art, from Antwerp to Naples. But it would be useless, where close and immediate comparison with works in our own Academy is desirable, to refer to the details of pictures at Rome or Munich ; and it would be impossible to speak at once with just feeling, as regarded the possessor, and just freedom, as regarded the public, of pictures in private galleries. Whatever particular references have been made for illustration, have been therefore confined, as far as was in my power, to works in the National and Dulwich Galleries.

Finally, I have to apologize for the imperfection of a work which I could have wished not to have executed, but with years of reflection and revisal. It is owing to my sense of the necessity of such revisal, that only a portion of the work is now presented to the public ; but that portion is both complete in itself, and is more peculiarly directed against the crying evil which called for instant remedy. Whether I ever completely fulfil my intention, will partly depend upon the spirit in which the present volume is received. If it be attributed to an invidious spirit, or a desire for the advancement of individual interests. I could hope to effect little good by farther effort. If, on the contrary, its real feeling and intention be understood, I shall shrink from no labor in the execution of a task which may tend, however feebly, to the advancement of the cause of real art in England, and to the honor of those great living Masters whom we now neglect or malign, to pour our flattery into the ear of Death, and exalt, with vain acclamation, the names of those who neither demand our praise, nor regard our gratitude.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It is allowed by the most able writers on naval and military tactics, that although the attack by successive divisions absolutely requires in the attacking party such an inherent superiority in quality of force, and such consciousness of that superiority, as may enable his front columns, or his leading ships, to support themselves for a considerable period against overwhelming numbers ; it yet insures, if maintained with constancy, the most total ruin of the opposing force. Convinced of the truth, and therefore assured of the ultimate prevalence and victory of the principles which I have advocated, and equally confident that the strength of the cause must give weight to the strokes of even the weakest of its defenders, I permitted myself to yield to a somewhat hasty and hot-headed desire of being, at whatever risk, in the thick of the fire, and began the contest with a part, and that the weakest and least considerable part, of the forces at my disposal. And I now find the volume thus boldly laid before the public in a position much resembling that of the Royal Sovereign at Trafalgar, receiving, unsupported, the broadsides of half the enemy's fleet, while unforeseen circumstances have hitherto prevented, and must yet for a time prevent, my heavier ships of the line from taking any part in the action. I watched the first moments of the struggle with some anxiety for the solitary vessel,—an anxiety which I have now ceased to feel,—for the flag of truth waves brightly through the smoke of the battle, and my antagonists, wholly intent on the destruction of the leading ship, have lost their position, and exposed themselves in defenceless disorder to the attack of the following columns.

If, however, I have had no reason to regret my hasty advance, as far as regards the ultimate issue of the struggle, I have yet found it to occasion much misconception of the character,

and some diminution of the influence, of the present essay. For though the work has been received as only in sanguine moments I had ventured to hope, though I have had the pleasure of knowing that in many instances its principles have carried with them a strength of conviction amounting to a demonstration of their truth, and that, even where it has had no other influence, it has excited interest, suggested inquiry, and prompted to a just and frank comparison of Art with Nature; yet this effect would have been greater still, had not the work been supposed, as it seems to have been by many readers, a completed treatise, containing a systematized statement of the whole of my views on the subject of modern art. Considered as such, it surprises me that the book should have received the slightest attention. For what respect could be due to a writer who pretended to criticise and classify the works of the great painters of landscape, without developing, or even alluding to, one single principle of the beautiful or sublime? So far from being a completed essay, it is little more than the introduction to the mass of evidence and illustration which I have yet to bring forward; it treats of nothing but the initiatory steps of art, states nothing but the elementary rules of criticism, touches only on merits attainable by accuracy of eye and fidelity of hand, and leaves for future consideration every one of the eclectic qualities of pictures, all of good that is prompted by feeling, and of great that is guided by judgment; and its function and scope should the less have been mistaken, because I have not only most carefully arranged the subject in its commencement, but have given frequent references throughout to the essays by which it is intended to be succeeded, in which I shall endeavor to point out the signification and the value of those phenomena of external nature which I have been hitherto compelled to describe without reference either to their inherent beauty, or to the lessons which may be derived from them.

Yet, to prevent such misconception in future, I may perhaps be excused for occupying the reader's time with a fuller statement of the feelings with which the work was undertaken, of its general plan, and of the conclusions and positions which I hope to be able finally to deduce and maintain.

Nothing, perhaps, bears on the face of it more appearance of folly, ignorance, and impertinence, than any attempt to diminish the honor of those to whom the assent of many generations

has assigned a throne ; for the truly great of later times have, almost without exception, fostered in others the veneration of departed power which they felt themselves, satisfied in all humility to take their seat at the feet of those whose honor is brightened by the hoariness of time, and to wait for the period when the lustre of many departed days may accumulate on their own heads, in the radiance which culminates as it recedes. The envious and incompetent have usually been the leaders of attack, content if, like the foulness of the earth, they may attract to themselves notice by their noisomeness, or, like its insects, exalt themselves by virulence into visibility. While, however, the envy of the vicious, and the insolence of the ignorant, are occasionally shown in their nakedness by *futile* efforts to degrade the dead, it is worthy of consideration whether they may not more frequently escape detection in *successful* efforts to degrade the living,—whether the very same malice may not be gratified, the very same incompetence demonstrated in the unjust lowering of present greatness, and the unjust exaltation of a perished power, as, if exerted and manifested in a less safe direction, would have classed the critic with Nero and Caligula, with Zoilus and Per-rault. Be it remembered, that the spirit of detraction is detected only when unsuccessful, and receives least punishment where it effects the greatest injury ; and it cannot but be felt that there is as much danger that the rising of new stars should be concealed by the mists which are unseen, as that those throned in heaven should be darkened by the clouds which are visible.

There is, I fear, so much malice in the hearts of most men, that they are chiefly jealous of that praise which can give the greatest pleasure, and are then most liberal of eulogium when it can no longer be enjoyed. They grudge not the whiteness of the sepulchre, because by no honor they can bestow upon it can the senseless corpse be rendered an object of envy : but they are niggardly of the reputation which contributes to happiness, or advances to fortune. They are glad to obtain credit for generosity and humility by exalting those who are beyond the reach of praise, and thus to escape the more painful necessity of doing homage to a living rival. They are rejoiced to set up a standard of imaginary excellence, which may enable them, by insisting on the inferiority of a contemporary work to the things that have been, to withdraw the attention from its superiority to the

things that are. The same undercurrent of jealousy operates in our reception of animadversion. Men have commonly more pleasure in the criticism which hurts than in that which is innocuous, and are more tolerant of the severity which breaks hearts and ruins fortunes, than of that which falls impotently on the grave.

And thus well says the good and deep-minded Richard Hooker : “ To the best and wisest, while they live, the world is continually a froward opposite ; and a curious observer of their defects and imperfections, their virtues afterwards it as much admireth. And for this cause, many times that which deserveth admiration would hardly be able to find favor, if they which propose it were not content to profess themselves therein scholars and followers of the ancient. For the world will not endure to hear that we are wiser than any have been which went before.”—Book v. ch. vii. 3. He therefore who would maintain the cause of contemporary excellence against that of elder time, must have almost every class of men arrayed against him. The generous, because they would not find matter of accusation against established dignities ; the envious, because they like not the sound of a living man’s praise ; the wise, because they prefer the opinion of centuries to that of days ; and the foolish, because they are incapable of forming an opinion of their own. Obloquy so universal is not lightly to be risked, and the few who make an effort to stem the torrent, as it is made commonly in favor of their own works, deserve the contempt which is their only reward. Nor is this to be regretted, in its influence on the progress and preservation of things technical and communicable. Respect for the ancients is the salvation of art, though it sometimes blinds us to its *ends*. It increases the power of the painter, though it diminishes his liberty ; and if it be sometimes an incumbrance to the essays of invention, it is oftener a protection from the consequences of audacity. The whole system and discipline of art, the collected results of the experience of ages, might, but for the fixed authority of antiquity, be swept away by the rage of fashion, or lost in the glare of novelty ; and the knowledge which it had taken centuries to accumulate, the principles which mighty minds had arrived at only in dying, might be overthrown by the frenzy of a faction, and abandoned in the insolence of an hour.

Neither, in its general application, is the persuasion of the

superiority of former works less just than useful. The greater number of them are, and must be, immeasurably nobler than any of the results of present effort, because that which is best of the productions of four thousand years must necessarily be in its accumulation, beyond all rivalry from the works of any given generation ; but it should always be remembered that it is improbable that many, and impossible that all, of such works, though the greatest yet produced, should approach abstract perfection ; that there is certainly something left for us to carry farther, or complete ; that any given generation has just the same chance of producing some individual mind of first-rate calibre, as any of its predecessors ; and that if such a mind *should* arise, the chances are, that with the assistance of experience and example, it would, in its particular and chosen path, do greater things than had been before done.

We must therefore be cautious not to lose sight of the real use of what has been left us by antiquity, nor to take that for a model of perfection which is, in many cases, only a guide to it. The picture which is looked to for an interpretation of nature is invaluable, but the picture which is taken as a substitute for nature, had better be burned ; and the young artist, while he should shrink with horror from the iconoclast who would tear from him every landmark and light which has been bequeathed him by the ancients, and leave him in a liberated childhood, may be equally certain of being betrayed by those who would give him the power and the knowledge of past time, and then fetter his strength from all advance, and bend his eyes backward on a beaten path—who would thrust canvas between him and the sky, and tradition between him and God.

And such conventional teaching is the more to be dreaded, because all that is highest in art, all that is creative and imaginative, is formed and created by every great master for himself, and cannot be repeated or imitated by others. We judge of the excellence of a rising writer, not so much by the resemblance of his works to what has been done before, as by their difference from it ; and while we advise him, in his first trials of strength, to set certain models before him with respect to inferior points, —one for versification, another for arrangement, another for treatment,—we yet admit not his greatness until he has broken away from all his models, and struck forth versification, arrangement, and treatment of his own.

Three points, therefore, I would especially insist upon as necessary to be kept in mind in all criticism of modern art. First, that there are few, very few of even the best productions of antiquity, which are not visibly and palpably imperfect in some kind or way, and conceivably improvable by farther study; that every nation, perhaps every generation, has in all probability some peculiar gift, some particular character of mind, enabling it to do something different from, or something in some sort better than what has been before done; and that therefore, unless art be a trick, or a manufacture, of which the secrets are lost, the greatest minds of existing nations, if exerted with the same industry, passion, and honest aim as those of past time, have a chance in their particular walk of doing something as great, or, taking the advantage of former example into account, even greater and better. It is difficult to conceive by what laws of logic some of the reviewers of the following Essay have construed its first sentence into a denial of this principle,—a denial such as their own conventional and shallow criticism of modern works invariably implies. I have said that “nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration without possessing in a *high* degree *some* species of sterling excellence.” Does it thence follow that it possesses in the *highest* degree *every* species of sterling excellence? “Yet thus,” says the sapient reviewer, “he admits the fact against which he mainly argues,—namely, the superiority of these time-honored productions.” As if the possession of an abstract excellence of some kind necessarily implied the possession of an incomparable excellence of every kind! There are few works of man so perfect as to admit of no conception of their being excelled,*—there are thousands which have been for centuries, and will be for centuries more, consecrated by public admiration, which are yet imperfect in many respects, and have been excelled, and may be excelled again. Do my opponents mean to assert that nothing good can ever be bettered, and that what is best of past time is necessarily best of all time? Perugino, I suppose, possessed some species of ster-

* One or two fragments of Greek sculpture, the works of Michael Angelo, considered with reference to their general conception and power, and the Madonna di St. Sisto, are all that I should myself put into such a category, not that even these are without defect, but their defects are such as mortality could never hope to rectify.

ling excellence, but Perugino was excelled by Raffaele ; and so Claude possesses some species of sterling excellence, but it follows not that he may not be excelled by Turner.

The second point on which I would insist is that if a mind *were* to arise of such power as to be capable of equalling or excelling some of the greatest works of past ages, the productions of such a mind would, in all probability, be totally different in manner and matter from all former productions ; for the more powerful the intellect, the less will its works resemble those of other men, whether predecessors or contemporaries. Instead of reasoning, therefore, as we commonly do, in matters of art, that because such and such a work does not resemble that which has hitherto been a canon, therefore it *must* be inferior and wrong in principle ; let us rather admit that there is in its very dissimilarity an increased chance of its being itself a new, and perhaps, a higher canon. If any production of modern art can be shown to have the authority of nature on its side, and to be based on eternal truths, it is all so much more in its favor, so much farther proof of its power, that it is totally different from all that have been before seen.*

The third point on which I would insist, is that if such a mind were to arise, it would necessarily divide the world of criticism into two factions ; the one, necessarily the largest and loudest, composed of men incapable of judging except by precedent, ignorant of general truth, and acquainted only with such particular truths as may have been illustrated or pointed out to them by former works, which class would of course be violent in vituperation, and increase in animosity as the master departed farther from their particular and preconceived canons

* This principle is dangerous, but not the less true, and necessary to be kept in mind. There is scarcely any truth which does not admit of being wrested to purposes of evil, and we must not deny the desirableness of originality, because men may err in seeking for it, or because a pretence to it may be made, by presumption, a cloak for its incompetence. Nevertheless, originality is never to be sought for its own sake—otherwise it will be mere aberration—it should arise naturally out of hard, independent study of nature ; and it should be remembered that in many things technical, it is impossible to alter without being inferior, for therein, as says Spencer, “ Truth is one, and right is ever one ;” but wrongs are various and multitudinous. “ Vice,” says Byron, in *Marino Faliero*, “ must have variety ; but Virtue stands like the sun, and all which rolls around drinks life from her aspect.”

of right,—thus wounding their vanity by impugning their judgment; the other, necessarily narrow of number, composed of men of general knowledge and unbiassed habits of thought, who would recognize in the work of the daring innovator a record and illustration of facts before unseized, who would justly and candidly estimate the value of the truths so rendered, and would increase in fervor of admiration as the master strode farther and deeper, and more daringly into dominions before unsearched or unknown; yet diminishing in multitude as they increased in enthusiasm: for by how much their leader became more impatient in his step—more impetuous in his success—more exalted in his research, by so much must the number capable of following him become narrower, until at last, supposing him never to pause in his advance, he might be left in the very culminating moment of his consummate achievement, with but a faithful few by his side, his former disciples fallen away, his former enemies doubled in numbers and virulence, and the evidence of his supremacy only to be wrought out by the devotion of men's lives to the earnest study of the new truths he had discovered and recorded.

Such a mind has arisen in our days. It has gone on from strength to strength, laying open fields of conquest peculiar to itself. It has occasioned such schism in the schools of criticism as was beforehand to be expected, and it is now at the zenith of its power, and, *consequently*, in the last phase of declining popularity.

This I know, and can prove. No man, says Southey, was ever yet convinced of any momentous truth without feeling in himself the power, as well as the desire of communicating it. In asserting and demonstrating the supremacy of this great master, I shall both do immediate service to the cause of right art, and shall be able to illustrate many principles of landscape painting which are of general application, and have hitherto been unacknowledged.

For anything like immediate effect on the public mind, I do not hope. "We mistake men's diseases," says Richard Baxter, "when we think there needeth nothing to cure them of their errors but the evidence of truth. Alas! there are many distempers of mind to be removed before they receive that evidence." Nevertheless, when it is fully laid before them, my duty will be done. Conviction will follow in due time.

I do not consider myself as in any way addressing, or having to do with, the ordinary critics of the press. Their writings are not the guide, but the expression, of public opinion. A writer for a newspaper naturally and necessarily endeavors to meet, as nearly as he can, the feelings of the majority of his readers ; his bread depends on his doing so. Precluded by the nature of his occupations from gaining any knowledge of art, he is sure that he can gain credit for it by expressing the opinions of his readers. He mocks the picture which the public pass, and bespatters with praise the canvas which a crowd concealed from him.

Writers like the present critic of *Blackwood's Magazine** deserve more respect—the respect due to honest, hopeless, helpless imbecility. There is something exalted in the innocence of their feeble-mindedness : one cannot suspect them of partiality, for it implies feeling ; nor of prejudice, for it implies some previous acquaintance with their subject. I do not know that even in this age of charlatanry, I could point to a more barefaced instance of imposture on the simplicity of the public, than the insertion of these pieces of criticism in a respectable periodical. We are not insulted with opinions on music from persons ignorant of its notes ; nor with treatises on philology by persons unacquainted with the alphabet ; but here is page after page of criticism, which one may read from end to end, looking for something which the writer knows, and finding nothing. Not his own language, for he has to look in his dictionary, by his own confession, for a word † occurring in one of the most important chapters of his Bible ; not the commonest traditions of the schools, for he does not know why Poussin was called

* It is with regret that, in a work of this nature, I take notice of criticisms, which, after all, are merely intended to amuse the careless reader, and be forgotten as soon as read ; but I do so in compliance with wishes expressed to me since the publication of this work, by persons who have the interests of art deeply at heart, and who, I find, attach more importance to the matter than I should have been disposed to do. I have, therefore, marked two or three passages which may enable the public to judge for themselves of the quality of these critiques ; and this I think a matter of justice to those who might otherwise have been led astray by them—more than this I cannot consent to do. I should have but a hound's office if I had to tear the tabard from every *Rouge Sanglier* of the arts—with bell and bauble to back him.

† *Chrysoprase*, (Vide No. for October, 1842, p. 502.)

“learned ;” * not the most simple canons of art, for he prefers Lee to Gainsborough ; † not the most ordinary facts of nature,

* Every school-boy knows that this epithet was given to Poussin in allusion to the profound classical knowledge of the painter. The reviewer, however, (September, 1841,) informs us that the expression refers to his skill in “ Composition.”

† Critique on Royal Academy, 1842. “ He” (Mr. Lee) “ often reminds us of Gainsborough’s best manner ; but he is *superior* to him always in subject, composition, and variety.”—Shade of Gainsborough !—deep-thoughted, solemn Gainsborough,—forgive us for re-writing this sentence ; we do so to gibbet its perpetrator forever,—and leave him swinging in the winds of the Fool’s Paradise. It is with great pain that I ever speak with severity of the works of living masters, especially when, like Mr. Lee’s, they are well intentioned, simple, free from affectation or imitation, and evidently painted with constant reference to nature. But I believe that these qualities will always secure him that admiration which he deserves—that there will be many unsophisticated and honest minds always ready to follow his guidance, and answer his efforts with delight ; and therefore, that I need not fear to point out in him the want of those technical qualities which are more especially the object of an artist’s admiration. Gainsborough’s power of color (it is mentioned by Sir Joshua as his peculiar gift) is capable of taking rank beside that of Rubens ; he is the purest colorist—Sir Joshua himself not excepted—of the whole English school ; with him, in fact, the *art* of painting did in great part die, and exists not now in Europe. Evidence enough will be seen in the following pages of my devoted admiration of Turner ; but I hesitate not to say, that in management and quality of single and particular tint, in the purely technical part of painting, Turner is a child of Gainsborough. Now, Mr. Lee never aims at color ; he does not make it his object in the slightest degree—the spring green of vegetation is all that he desires ; and it would be about as rational to compare his works with studied pieces of coloring, as the modulation of the Calabrian pipe to the harmony of a full orchestra. Gainsborough’s hand is as light as the sweep of a cloud—as swift as the flash of a sunbeam ; Lee’s execution is feeble and spotty. Gainsborough’s masses are as broad as the first division in heaven of light from darkness ; Lee’s (perhaps necessarily, considering the effects of flickering sunlight at which he aims) are as fragmentary as his leaves, and as numerous. Gainsborough’s forms are grand, simple, and ideal ; Lee’s are small, confused, and unselected. Gainsborough never loses sight of his picture as a whole ; Lee is but too apt to be shackled by its parts. In a word, Gainsborough is an immortal painter ; and Lee, though on the right road, is yet in the early stages of his art ; and the man who could imagine any resemblance or point of comparison between them, is not only a novice in art, but has not capacity ever to be anything more. He may be pardoned for not comprehending Turner, for long preparation and discipline are necessary before the abstract and profound philosophy of that artist can be met ; but Gainsborough’s excellence is based on principles of art long acknowledged, and facts of nature universally apparent ; and I insist more particularly on the reviewer’s want of feeling for his works,

for we find him puzzled by the epithet "silver," as applied to the orange blossom,—evidently never having seen anything silvery about an orange in his life, except a spoon. Nay, he leaves us not to conjecture his calibre from internal evidence; he candidly tells us (Oct. 1842) that he has been studying trees only for the last week, and bases his critical remarks chiefly on his practical experience of birch. More disinterested than our friend Sancho, he would disenchant the public from the magic of Turner by virtue of his own flagellation; Xanthias-like, he would rob his master of immortality by his own powers of endurance. What is Christopher North about? Does he receive his critiques from Eaton or Harrow—based on the experience of a week's birds'-nesting and its consequences? How low must art and its interests sink, when the public mind is inadequate to the detection of this effrontery of incapacity! In all kindness to Maga, we warn her, that, though the nature of this work precludes us from devoting space to the exposure, there may come a time when the public shall be themselves able to distinguish ribaldry from reasoning, and may require some better and higher qualifications in their critics of art, than the experience of a school-boy, and the capacities of a buffoon.

It is not, however, merely to vindicate the reputation of those whom writers like these defame, which would but be to anticipate by a few years the natural and inevitable reaction of the public mind, that I am devoting years of labor to the development of the principles on which the great productions of recent art are based. I have a higher end in view—one which may, I think, justify me, not only in the sacrifice of my own time, but in calling on my readers to follow me through an investigation far more laborious than could be adequately rewarded by mere insight into the merits of a particular master, or the spirit of a particular age.

It is a question which, in spite of the claims of Painting to be

because it proves a truth of which the public ought especially to be assured that those who lavish abuse on the great men of modern times, are equally incapable of perceiving the real excellence of established canons, are ignorant of the commonest and most acknowledged principia of the art, blind to the most palpable and comprehensible of its beauties, incapable of distinguishing, if left to themselves, a master's work from the vilest school copy, and founding their applause of those great works which they praise either in pure hypocrisy, or in admiration of their defects.

called the Sister of Poetry, appears to me to admit of considerable doubt, whether art has ever, except in its earliest and rudest stages, possessed anything like efficient moral influence on mankind. Better the state of Rome when "*magnorum artificum frangebat pocula miles, ut phaleris gauderet equus,*" than when her walls flashed with the marble and the gold, "*nec cessabat luxuria id agere, ut quam plurimum incendiis perdat.*" Better the state of religion in Italy, before Giotto had broken on one barbarism of the Byzantine schools, than when the painter of the Last Judgment, and the sculptor of the Perseus, sat reveling side by side. It appears to me that a rude symbol is oftener more efficient than a refined one in touching the heart, and that as pictures rise in rank as works of art, they are regarded with less devotion and more curiosity.

But, however this may be, and whatever influence we may be disposed to admit in the great works of sacred art, no doubt can, I think, be reasonably entertained as to the utter inutility of all that has been hitherto accomplished by the painters of landscape. No moral end has been answered, no permanent good effected, by any of their works. They may have amused the intellect, or exercised the ingenuity, but they never have spoken to the heart. Landscape art has never taught us one deep or holy lesson; it has not recorded that which is fleeting, nor penetrated that which was hidden, nor interpreted that which was obscure; it has never made us feel the wonder, nor the power, nor the glory, of the universe; it has not prompted to devotion, nor touched with awe; its power to move and exalt the heart has been fatally abused, and perished in the abusing. That which ought to have been a witness to the omnipotence of God, has become an exhibition of the dexterity of man, and that which should have lifted our thoughts to the throne of the Deity, has encumbered them with the inventions of his creatures.

If we stand for a little time before any of the more celebrated works of landscape, listening to the comments of the passers-by, we shall hear numberless expressions relating to the skill of the artist, but very few relating to the perfection of nature. Hundreds will be voluble in admiration, for one who will be silent in delight. Multitudes will laud the composition, and depart with the praise of Claude on their lips,—not one will feel

as if it were *no* composition, and depart with the praise of God in his heart.

These are the signs of a debased, mistaken, and false school of painting. The skill of the artist, and the perfection of his art, are never proved until both are forgotten. The artist has done nothing till he has concealed himself,—the art is imperfect which is visible,—the feelings are but feebly touched, if they permit us to reason on the methods of their excitement. In the reading of a great poem, in the hearing of a noble oration, it is the subject of the writer, and not his skill,—his passion, not his power, on which our minds are fixed. We see as he sees, but we see not him. We become part of him, feel with him, judge, behold with him; but we think *of* him as little as of ourselves. Do we think of Æschylus while we wait on the silence of Cassandra,* or of Shakspeare, while we listen to the wailing of Lear? Not so. The power of the masters is shown by their self-annihilation. It is commensurate with the degree in which they themselves appear not in their work. The harp of the minstrel is untruly touched, if his own glory is all that it records. Every great writer may be at once known by his guiding the mind far from himself, to the beauty which is not of his creation, and the knowledge which is past his finding out.

And must it ever be otherwise with painting, for otherwise it has ever been. Her subjects have been regarded as mere themes on which the artist's power is to be displayed; and that power, be it of imitation, composition, idealization, or of whatever other kind, is the chief object of the spectator's observation. It is man and his fancies, man and his trickeries, man and his inventions,—poor, paltry, weak, self-sighted man,—which the connoisseur forever seeks and worships. Among potsherds and dunghills, among drunken boors and withered beldames, through every scene of debauchery and degradation, we follow

* There is a fine touch in the *Frogs* in Aristophanes, alluding probably to this part of the *Agamemnon*. “Ἐγὼ δ' ἔχαιρον τῇ σιωπῇ καὶ με τοῦτ' ἔτερπεν οὐκ ἦττον ἢ νῦν οἱ λαλοῦντες.” The same remark might be well applied to the seemingly vacant or incomprehensible portions of Turner's canvas. In their mysterious and intense fire, there is much correspondence between the mind of Æschylus and that of our great painter. They share at least one thing in common—unpopularity. Ὁ δῆμος ἀνεβόα κρίσιν ποιεῖν. *ΞΑ.* ὁ τῶν πανοῦργων; *ΑΙ.* νῆ Δί, οὐράνιον γ' ὅσον. *ΞΑ.* μετ' Αἰσχύλου δ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἕτεροι σύμμαχοι; *ΑΙ.* ὀλίγον τὸ χρηστὸν ἐστίν.

the erring artist, not to receive one wholesome lesson, not to be touched with pity, nor moved with indignation, but to watch the dexterity of the pencil, and gloat over the glittering of the hue.

I speak not only of the works of the Flemish School—I wage no war with their admirers; they may be left in peace to count the spiculæ of haystacks and the hairs of donkeys—it is also of works of real mind that I speak,—works in which there are evidences of genius and workings of power,—works which have been held up as containing all of the beautiful that art can reach or man conceive. And I assert with sorrow, that all hitherto done in landscape, by those commonly conceived its masters, has never prompted one holy thought in the minds of nations. It has begun and ended in exhibiting the dexterities of individuals, and conventionalities of systems. Filling the world with the honor of Claude and Salvator, it has never once tended to the honor of God.

Does the reader start in reading these last words, as if they were those of wild enthusiasm,—as if I were lowering the dignity of religion by supposing that its cause could be advanced by such means? His surprise proves my position. It *does* sound like wild, like absurd enthusiasm, to expect any definite moral agency in the painters of landscape; but ought it so to sound? Are the gorgeousness of the visible hue, the glory of the realized form, instruments in the artist's hand so ineffective, that they can answer no nobler purpose than the amusement of curiosity, or the engagement of idleness? Must it not be owing to gross neglect or misapplication of the means at his command, that while words and tones (means of representing nature surely less powerful than lines and colors) can kindle and purify the very inmost souls of men, the painter can only hope to entertain by his efforts at expression, and must remain forever brooding over his incommunicable thoughts?

The cause of the evil lies, I believe, deep-seated in the system of ancient landscape art; it consists, in a word, in the painter's taking upon him to modify God's works at his pleasure, casting the shadow of himself on all he sees, constituting himself arbiter where it is honor to be a disciple, and exhibiting his ingenuity by the attainment of combinations whose highest praise is that they are impossible. We shall not pass through a single gallery of old art, without hearing this topic of praise

confidently advanced. The sense of artificialness, the absence of all appearance of reality, the clumsiness of combination by which the meddling of man is made evident, and the feebleness of his hand branded on the inorganization of his monstrous creature, is advanced as a proof of inventive power, as an evidence of abstracted conception ;—nay, the violation of specific form, the utter abandonment of all organic and individual character of object, (numberless examples of which from the works of the old masters are given in the following pages,) is constantly held up by the unthinking critic as the foundation of the grand or historical style, and the first step to the attainment of a pure ideal. Now, there is but one grand style, in the treatment of all subjects whatsoever, and that style is based on the *perfect* knowledge, and consists in the simple, unencumbered rendering, of the specific characters of the given object, be it man, beast, or flower. Every change, caricature, or abandonment of such specific character, is as destructive of grandeur as it is of truth, of beauty as of propriety. Every alteration of the features of nature has its origin either in powerless indolence or blind audacity, in the folly which forgets, or the insolence which desecrates, works which it is the pride of angels to know, and their privilege to love.

We sometimes hear such infringement of universal laws justified on the plea, that the frequent introduction of mythological abstractions into ancient landscape requires an imaginary character of form in the material objects with which they are associated. Something of this kind is hinted in Reynolds's 14th Discourse ; but nothing can be more false than such reasoning. If there be any truth or beauty in the original conception of the spiritual being so introduced, there must be a true and real connection between that abstract idea * and the fea-

* I do not know any passage in ancient literature in which this connection is more exquisitely illustrated than in the lines, burlesque though they be, descriptive of the approach of the chorus in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, —a writer, by the way, who, I believe, knew and felt more of the noble landscape character of his country than any whose works have come down to us except Homer. The individuality and distinctness of conception—the visible cloud character which every word of this particular passage brings out into more dewy and bright existence, are to me as refreshing as the real breathing of mountain winds. The line “*διὰ τῶν κοίλων καὶ τῶν δασέων, πλάγιοι,*” could have been written by none but an ardent lover of hill scenery—one who had watched, hour after hour, the peculiar oblique, side-

tures of nature as she was and is. The woods and waters which were peopled by the Greek with typical life were not different from those which now wave and murmur by the ruins of his shrines. With their visible and actual forms was his imagination filled, and the beauty of its incarnate creatures can only be understood among the pure realities which originally modelled their conception. If divinity be stamped upon the features, or apparent in the form of the spiritual creature, the mind will not be shocked by its appearing to ride upon the whirlwind, and trample on the storm ; but if mortality, no violation of the characters of the earth will forge one single link to bind it to the heaven.

Is there then no such thing as elevated ideal character of landscape? Undoubtedly ; and Sir Joshua, with the great master of this character, Nicolo Poussin, present to his thoughts, ought to have arrived at more true conclusions respecting its essence than, as we shall presently see, are deducible from his works. The true ideal of landscape is precisely the same as that of the human form ; it is the expression of the specific—not the individual, but the specific—characters of every object, in their perfection ; there is an ideal form of every herb, flower, and tree : it is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease. Every landscape painter should know the specific characters of every object he has to represent, rock, flower, or cloud ; and in his highest ideal works, all their distinctions will be perfectly expressed, broadly or delicately, slightly or completely, according to the nature of the subject, and the degree of attention which is to be drawn to the particular object by the part it plays in the composition. Where the sublime is aimed at, such distinctions will be indicated with severe simplicity, as the muscular markings in a colossal statue ; where beauty is the object, they must be expressed with the utmost refinement of which the hand is capable.

This may sound like a contradiction of principles advanced by the highest authorities ; but it is only a contradiction of a particular and most mistaken application of them. Much evil

long action of descending clouds, as they form along the hollows and ravines of the hills. There are no lumpish solidities—no pillowy protuberances here. All is melting, drifting, evanescent,—full of air, and light, and dew.

has been done to art by the remarks of historical painters on landscape. Accustomed themselves to treat their backgrounds slightly and boldly, and feeling (though, as I shall presently show, only in consequence of their own deficient powers) that any approach to completeness of detail therein, injures their picture by interfering with its principal subject, they naturally lose sight of the peculiar and intrinsic beauties of things which to them are injurious, unless subordinate. Hence the frequent advice given by Reynolds and others, to neglect *specific* form in landscape, and treat its materials in large masses, aiming only at general truths,—the flexibility of foliage, but not its kind ; the rigidity of rock, but not its mineral character. In the passage more especially bearing on this subject (in the eleventh lecture of Sir J. Reynolds), we are told that “the landscape painter works not for the virtuoso or the naturalist, but for the general observer of life and nature.” This is true, in precisely the same sense that the sculptor does not work for the anatomist, but for the common observer of life and nature. Yet the sculptor is not, for this reason, permitted to be wanting either in knowledge or expression of anatomical detail ; and the more refined that expression can be rendered, the more perfect is his work. That which, to the anatomist, is the end,—is, to the sculptor, the means. The former desires details, for their own sake ; the latter, that by means of them, he may kindle his work with life, and stamp it with beauty. And so in landscape ;—botanical or geological details are not to be given as matter of curiosity or subject of search, but as the ultimate elements of every species of expression and order of loveliness.

In his observations on the foreground of the St. Pietro Martire, Sir Joshua advances, as matter of praise, that the plants are discriminated “just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more.” Had this foreground been occupied by a group of animals, we should have been surprised to be told that the lion, the serpent, and the dove, or whatever other creatures might have been introduced, were distinguished from each other just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more. Yet is it to be supposed that the distinctions of the vegetable world are less complete, less essential, or less divine in origin, than those of the animal ? If the distinctive forms of animal life are meant for our reverent observance, is it likely that those of vegetable life are made merely to be swept away ? The latter are indeed less

obvious and less obtrusive ; for which very reason there is less excuse for omitting them, because there is less danger of their disturbing the attention or engaging the fancy.

But Sir Joshua is as inaccurate in fact, as false in principle. He himself furnishes a most singular instance of the very error of which he accuses Vaseni,—the seeing what he expects ; or, rather, in the present case, not seeing what he does not expect. The great masters of Italy, almost without exception, and Titian perhaps more than any, (for he had the highest knowledge of landscape,) are in the constant habit of rendering every detail of their foregrounds with the most laborious botanical fidelity : witness the “ Bacchus and Ariadne,” in which the foreground is occupied by the common blue iris, the aquilegia, and the wild rose ; *every stamen* of which latter is given, while the blossoms and leaves of the columbine (a difficult flower to draw) have been studied with the most exquisite accuracy. The foregrounds of Raffaele’s two cartoons,—“ The Miraculous Draught of Fishes” and “ The Charge to Peter,”—are covered with plants of the common sea colewort, (*crambe maritima*,) of which the sinuated leaves and clustered blossoms would have exhausted the patience of any other artist ; but have appeared worthy of prolonged and thoughtful labor to the great mind of Raffaele.

It appears then, not only from natural principles, but from the highest of all authority, that thorough knowledge of the lowest details is necessary and full expression of them right, even in the highest class of historical painting ; that it will not take away from, nor interfere with, the interest of the figures ; but, rightly managed, must add to and elucidate it ; and, if further proof be wanting, I would desire the reader to compare the background of Sir Joshua’s “ Holy Family,” in the National Gallery, with that of Nicolo Poussin’s “ Nursing of Jupiter,” in the Dulwich Gallery. The first, owing to the utter neglect of all botanical detail, has lost every atom of ideal character, and reminds us of nothing but an English fashionable flower garden :—the formal pedestal adding considerably to the effect. Poussin’s, in which every vine leaf is drawn with consummate skill and untiring diligence, produces not only a tree group of the most perfect grace and beauty, but one which, in its pure and simple truth, belongs to every age of nature, and adapts itself to the history of all time. If, then, such entire

rendering of specific character be necessary to the historical painter, in cases where these lower details are entirely subordinate to his human subject, how much more must it be necessary in landscape, where they themselves constitute the subject, and where the undivided attention is to be drawn to them.

There is a singular sense in which the child may peculiarly be said to be father of the man. In many arts and attainments, the first and last stages of progress—the infancy and the consummation—have many features in common; while the intermediate stages are wholly unlike either, and are farthest from the right. Thus it is in the progress of a painter's handling. We see the perfect child,—the absolute beginner, using of necessity a broken, imperfect, inadequate line, which, as he advances, becomes gradually firm, severe, and decided. Yet before he becomes a perfect artist, this severity and decision will again be exchanged for a light and careless stroke, which in many points will far more resemble that of his childhood than of his middle age—differing from it only by the consummate effect wrought out by the apparently inadequate means. So it is in many matters of opinion. Our first and last coincide, though on different grounds; it is the middle stage which is farthest from the truth. Childhood often holds a truth with its feeble fingers, which the grasp of manhood cannot retain,—which it is the pride of utmost age to recover.

Perhaps this is in no instance more remarkable than in the opinion we form upon the subject of detail in works of art. Infants in judgment, we look for specific character, and complete finish—we delight in the faithful plumage of the well-known bird—in the finely drawn leafage of the discriminated flower. As we advance in judgment, we scorn such detail altogether; we look for impetuosity of execution, and breadth of effect. But, perfected in judgment, we return in a great measure to our early feelings, and thank Raffaele for the shells upon his sacred beach, and for the delicate stamens of the herbage beside his inspired St. Catherine.*

Of those who take interest in art, nay, even of artists them-

* Let not this principle be confused with Fuseli's, "love for what is called deception in painting marks either the infancy or decrepitude of a nation's taste." Realization to the mind necessitates not deception of the eye.

selves, there are an hundred in the middle stage of judgment, for one who is in the last ; and this not because they are destitute of the power to discover, or the sensibility to enjoy the truth, but because the truth bears so much semblance of error—the last stage of the journey to the first,—that every feeling which guides to it is checked in its origin. The rapid and powerful artist necessarily looks with such contempt on those who seek minutiae of detail *rather* than grandeur of impression, that it is almost impossible for him to conceive of the great last step in art, by which both become compatible. He has so often to dash the delicacy out of the pupil's work, and to blot the details from his encumbered canvas ; so frequently to lament the loss of breadth and unity, and so seldom to reprehend the imperfection of minutiae, that he necessarily looks upon complete *parts* as the very sign of error, weakness, and ignorance. Thus, frequently to the latest period of his life, he separates, like Sir Joshua, as chief enemies, the details and the whole, which an artist cannot be great unless he reconciles ; and because details alone, and unREFERRED to a final purpose, are the sign of a tyro's work, he loses sight of the remoter truth, that details perfect in unity, and, contributing to a final purpose, are the sign of the production of a consummate master.

It is not, therefore, detail sought for its own sake,—not the calculable bricks of the Dutch house-painters, nor the numbered hairs and mapped wrinkles of Denner, which constitute great art,—they are the lowest and most contemptible art ; but it is detail referred to a great end,—sought for the sake of the inestimable beauty which exists in the slightest and least of God's works, and treated in a manly, broad, and impressive manner. There may be as much greatness of mind, as much nobility of manner in a master's treatment of the smallest features, as in his management of the most vast ; and this greatness of manner chiefly consists in seizing the specific character of the object, together with all the great qualities of beauty which it has in common with higher orders of existence,* while he utterly rejects the meaner beauties which are accidentally peculiar to the object, and yet not specifically characteristic of it. I cannot give

* I shall show, in a future portion of the work, that there are principles of universal beauty common to all the creatures of God ; and that it is by the greater or less share of these that one form becomes nobler or meaner than another.

a better instance than the painting of the flowers in Titian's picture above mentioned. While every stamen of the rose is given, because this was necessary to mark the flower, and while the curves and large characters of the leaves are rendered with exquisite fidelity, there is no vestige of particular texture, of moss, bloom, moisture, or any other accident—no dew-drops, nor flies, nor trickeries of any kind ; nothing beyond the simple forms and hues of the flowers,—even those hues themselves being simplified and broadly rendered. The varieties of aquilegia have, in reality, a grayish and uncertain tone of color ; and, I believe, never attain the intense purity of blue with which Titian has gifted his flower. But the master does not aim at the particular color of individual blossoms ; he seizes the type of all, and gives it with the utmost purity and simplicity of which color is capable.

These laws being observed, it will not only be in the power, it will be the duty,—the imperative duty,—of the landscape painter, to descend to the lowest details with undiminished attention. Every herb and flower of the field has its specific, distinct, and perfect beauty ; it has its peculiar habitation, expression, and function. The highest art is that which seizes this specific character, which develops and illustrates it, which assigns to it its proper position in the landscape, and which, by means of it, enhances and enforces the great impression which the picture is intended to convey. Nor is it of herbs and flowers alone that such scientific representation is required. Every class of rock, every kind of earth, every form of cloud, must be studied with equal industry, and rendered with equal precision. And thus we find ourselves unavoidably led to a conclusion directly opposed to that constantly enunciated dogma of the parrot-critic, that the features of nature must be “generalized,”—a dogma whose inherent and broad absurdity would long ago have been detected, if it had not contained in its convenient falsehood an apology for indolence, and a disguise for incapacity. Generalized ! As if it were possible to generalize things generically different. Of such common cant of criticism I extract a characteristic passage from one of the reviews of this work, that in this year's *Athenæum* for February 10th : “He (the author) would have geological landscape painters, dendrologic, meteorologic, and doubtless entomologic, ichthyologic, every kind of physiologic painter united in the same person ;

yet, alas, for true poetic art among all these learned Thebans! No; landscape painting must not be reduced to mere portraiture of inanimate substances, Denner-like portraiture of the earth's face. * * * * * Ancient landscapists took a broader, deeper, higher view of their art; they neglected particular traits, and gave only general features. Thus they attained mass and force, harmonious union and simple effect, the elements of grandeur and beauty."

To all such criticism as this (and I notice it only because it expresses the feelings into which many sensible and thoughtful minds have been fashioned by infection) the answer is simple and straightforward. It is just as impossible to generalize granite and slate, as it is to generalize a man and a cow. An animal must be either one animal or another animal; it cannot be a general animal, or it is no animal; and so a rock must be either one rock or another rock; it cannot be a general rock, or it is no rock. If there were a creature in the foreground of a picture, of which he could not decide whether it were a pony or a pig, the Athenæum critic would perhaps affirm it to be a generalization of pony and pig, and consequently a high example of "harmonious union and simple effect." But *I* should call it simple bad drawing. And so when there are things in the foreground of Salvator of which I cannot pronounce whether they be granite or slate, or tufa, I affirm that there is in them neither harmonious union nor simple effect, but simple monstrosity. There is no grandeur, no beauty of any sort or kind; nothing but destruction, disorganization, and ruin, to be obtained by the violation of natural distinctions. The elements of brutes can only mix in corruption, the elements of inorganic nature only in annihilation. We may, if we choose, put together centaur monsters; but they must still be half man, half horse; they cannot be both man and horse, nor either man or horse. And so, if landscape painters choose, they may give us rocks which shall be half granite and half slate; but they cannot give us rocks which shall be either granite or slate, nor which shall be both granite and slate. Every attempt to produce that which shall be *any* rock, ends in the production of that which is *no* rock.

It is true that the distinctions of rocks and plants and clouds are less conspicuous, and less constantly subjects of observation than those of the animal creation; but the difficulty of observ-

ing them proves not the merit of overlooking them. It only accounts for the singular fact, that the world has never yet seen anything like a perfect school of landscape. For just as the highest historical painting is based on perfect knowledge of the workings of the human form, and human mind, so must the highest landscape painting be based on perfect cognizance of the form, functions, and system of every organic or definitely structured existence which it has to represent. This proposition is self-evident to every thinking mind ; and every principle which appears to contradict it is either misstated or misunderstood. For instance, the Athenæum critic calls the right statement of generic difference "*Denner-like portraiture.*" If he can find anything like Denner in what I have advanced as the utmost perfection of landscape art—the recent works of Turner—he is welcome to his discovery and his theory. No ; Denner-like portraiture would be the endeavor to paint the separate crystals of quartz and felspar in the granite, and the separate flakes of mica in the mica slate,—an attempt just as far removed from what I assert to be great art, (the bold rendering of the generic characters of form in both rocks,) as modern sculpture of lace and button-holes is from the Elgin marbles. Martin has attempted this Denner-like portraiture of sea-foam with the assistance of an acre of canvas—with what success, I believe the critics of his last year's *Canute* had, for once, sense enough to decide.

Again, it does not follow that because such accurate knowledge is *necessary* to the painter that it should constitute the painter, nor that such knowledge is valuable in itself, and without reference to high ends. Every kind of knowledge may be sought from ignoble motives, and for ignoble ends ; and in those who so possess it, it is ignoble knowledge ; while the very same knowledge is in another mind an attainment of the highest dignity, and conveying the greatest blessing. This is the difference between the mere botanist's knowledge of plants, and the great poet's or painter's knowledge of them. The one notes their distinctions for the sake of swelling his herbarium, the other, that he may render them vehicles of expression and emotion. The one counts the stamens, and affixes a name, and is content ; the other observes every character of the plant's color and form ; considering each of its attributes as an element of expression, he seizes on its lines of grace or energy, rigidity or

repose ; notes the feebleness or the vigor, the serenity or tremulousness of its hues ; observes its local habits, its love or fear of peculiar places, its nourishment or destruction by particular influences ; he associates it in his mind with all the features of the situations it inhabits, and the ministering agencies necessary to its support. Thenceforward the flower is to him a living creature, with histories written on its leaves, and passions breathing in its motion. Its occurrence in his picture is no mere point of color, no meaningless spark of light. It is a voice rising from the earth,—a new chord of the mind's music,—a necessary note in the harmony of his picture, contributing alike to its tenderness and its dignity, nor less to its loveliness than its truth.

The particularization of flowers by Shakspeare and Shelley affords us the most frequent examples of the exalted use of these inferior details. It is true that the painter has not the same power of expressing the thoughts with which his symbols are connected ; he is dependent in some degree on the knowledge and feeling of the spectator ; but, by the destruction of such details, his foreground is not rendered more intelligible to the ignorant, although it ceases to have interest for the informed. It is no excuse for illegible writing that there are persons who could not have read it had it been plain.

I repeat then, generalization, as the word is commonly understood, is the act of a vulgar, incapable, and unthinking mind. To see in all mountains nothing but similar heaps of earth ; in all rocks, nothing but similar concretions of solid matter ; in all trees, nothing but similar accumulations of leaves, is no sign of high feeling or extended thought. The more we know, and the more we feel, the more we separate ; we separate to obtain a more perfect unity. Stones, in the thoughts of the peasant, lie as they do on his field, one is like another, and there is no connection between any of them. The geologist distinguishes, and in distinguishing connects them. Each becomes different from its fellow, but in differing from, assumes a relation to its fellow ; they are no more each the repetition of the other,—they are parts of a system, and each implies and is connected with the existence of the rest. That generalization then is right, true, and noble, which is based on the knowledge of the distinctions and observance of the relations of individual kinds. That generalization is wrong, false, and con-

temptible, which is based on ignorance of the one, and disturbance of the other. It is indeed no generalization, but confusion and chaos; it is the generalization of a defeated army into indistinguishable impotence—the generalization of the elements of a dead carcass into dust.

Let us, then, without farther notice of the dogmata of the schools of art, follow forth those conclusions to which we are led by observance of the laws of nature.

I have just said that every class of rock, earth and cloud, must be known by the painter, with geologic and meteorologic accuracy.* Nor is this merely for the sake of obtaining the character of these minor features themselves, but more especially for the sake of reaching that simple, earnest, and consistent character which is visible in the *whole* effect of every natural landscape. Every geological formation has features entirely peculiar to itself; definite lines of fracture, giving rise to fixed resultant forms of rock and earth; peculiar vegetable products, among which still farther distinctions are wrought out by variations of climate and elevation. From such modifying circumstances arise the infinite varieties of the orders of landscape, of which each one shows perfect harmony among its several features, and possesses an ideal beauty of its own; a beauty not distinguished merely by such peculiarities as are wrought on the human form by change of climate, but by generic differences the most marked and essential; so that its classes cannot be generalized or amalgamated by any expedients whatsoever. The level marshes and rich meadows of the tertiary, the rounded swells and short pastures of the chalk, the square-built cliffs and cloven dells of the lower limestone, the soaring peaks and ridgy precipices of the primaries, having nothing in common among them—nothing which is not distinctive and incommuni-

* Is not this—it may be asked—demanding more from him than life can accomplish? Not one whit. Nothing more than knowledge of external characteristics is absolutely required; and even if, which were more desirable, thorough scientific knowledge had to be attained, the time which our artists spend in multiplying crude sketches, or finishing their unintelligent embryos of the study, would render them masters of every science that modern investigations have organized, and familiar with every form that Nature manifests. Martin, if the time which he must have spent on the abortive bubbles of his Canute had been passed in working on the seashore, might have learned enough to enable him to produce, with a few strokes, a picture which would have smote like the sound of the sea, upon men's hearts forever.

cable. Their very atmospheres are different—their clouds are different—their humors of storm and sunshine are different—their flowers, animals and forests are different. By each order of landscape—and its orders, I repeat, are infinite in number, corresponding not only to the several species of rock, but to the particular circumstances of the rocks' deposition or after treatment, and to the incalculable varieties of climate, aspect, and human interference :—by each order of landscape, I say, peculiar lessons are intended to be taught, and distinct pleasures to be conveyed ; and it is as utterly futile to talk of generalizing their impressions into an ideal landscape, as to talk of amalgamating all nourishment into one ideal food, gathering all music into one ideal movement, or confounding all thought into one ideal idea.

There is, however, such a thing as composition of different orders of landscape, though there can be no generalization of them. Nature herself perpetually brings together elements of various expression. Her barren rocks stoop through wooded promontories to the plain ; and the wreaths of the vine show through their green shadows the wan light of unperishing snow.

The painter, therefore, has the choice of either working out the isolated character of some one distinct class of scene, or of bringing together a multitude of different elements, which may adorn each other by contrast.

I believe that the simple and uncombined landscape, if wrought out with due attention to the ideal beauty of the features it includes, will always be the most powerful in its appeal to the heart. Contrast increases the splendor of beauty, but it disturbs its influence ; it adds to its attractiveness, but diminishes its power. On this subject I shall have much to say hereafter ; at present I merely wish to suggest the possibility, that the single-minded painter, who is working out on broad and simple principles, a piece of unbroken, harmonious landscape character, may be reaching an end in art quite as high as the more ambitious student who is always “ within five minutes' walk of everywhere,” making the ends of the earth contribute to his pictorial guazzetto ;* and the certainty, that unless the

* “ A green field is a sight which makes us pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction
Which mixes up vines, olive, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanoes, oranges, and ices.”

composition of the latter be regulated by severe judgment, and its members connected by natural links, it must become more contemptible in its motley, than an honest study of road-side weeds.

Let me, at the risk of tediously repeating what is universally known, refer to the common principles of historical composition, in order that I may show their application to that of landscape. The merest tyro in art knows that every figure which is unnecessary to his picture, is an encumbrance to it, and that every figure which does not sympathize with the action, interrupts it. He that gathereth not with me, scattereth,—is, or ought to be, the ruling principle of his plan : and the power and grandeur of his result will be exactly proportioned to the unity of feeling manifested in its several parts, and to the propriety and simplicity of the relations in which they stand to each other.

All this is equally applicable to the materials of inanimate nature. Impressiveness is destroyed by a multitude of contradictory facts, and the accumulation, which is not harmonious, is discordant. He who endeavors to unite simplicity with magnificence, to guide from solitude to festivity, and to contrast melancholy with mirth, must end by the production of confused inanity. There is a peculiar spirit possessed by every kind of scene ; and although a point of contrast may sometimes enhance and exhibit this particular feeling more intensely, it must be only a point, not an equalized opposition. Every introduction of new and different feeling weakens the force of what has already been impressed, and the mingling of all emotions must conclude in apathy, as the mingling of all colors in white.

Let us test by these simple rules one of the “ ideal ” landscape compositions of Claude, that known to the Italians as “ Il Mulino.”

The foreground is a piece of very lovely and perfect forest scenery, with a dance of peasants by a brookside ; quite enough subject to form, in the hands of a master, an impressive and complete picture. On the other side of the brook, however, we have a piece of pastoral life, a man with some bulls and goats tumbling headforemost into the water, owing to some sudden paralytic affection of all their legs. Even this group is one too many ; the shepherd had no business to drive his flock so near the dancers, and the dancers will certainly frighten the cattle.

But when we look farther into the picture, our feelings receive a sudden and violent shock, by the unexpected appearance, amidst things pastoral and musical, of the military : a number of Roman soldiers riding in on hobby-horses, with a leader on foot, apparently encouraging them to make an immediate and decisive charge on the musicians. Beyond the soldiers is a circular temple, in exceedingly bad repair, and close beside it, built against its very walls, a neat water-mill in full work. By the mill flows a large river, with a weir all across it. The weir has not been made for the mill, (for that receives its water from the hills by a trough carried over the temple,) but it is particularly ugly and monotonous in its line of fall, and the water below forms a dead-looking pond, on which some people are fishing in punts. The banks of this river resemble in contour the later geological formations around London, constituted chiefly of broken pots and oyster-shells. At an inconvenient distance from the water-side stands a city, composed of twenty-five round towers and a pyramid. Beyond the city is a handsome bridge ; beyond the bridge, part of the Campagna, with fragments of aqueducts ; beyond the Campagna, the chain of the Alps ; on the left, the cascades of Tivoli.

This is, I believe, a fair example of what is commonly called an "ideal landscape," *i.e.*, a group of the artist's studies from nature, individually spoiled, selected with such opposition of character as may insure their neutralizing each other's effect, and united with sufficient unnaturalness and violence of association to insure their producing a general sensation of the impossible. Let us analyze the separate subjects a little in this ideal work of Claude's.

Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men.* The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly

* The vegetable soil of the Campagna is chiefly formed by decomposed lavas, and under it lies a bed of white pumice, exactly resembling remnants of bones.

along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep ; scattered blocks of black stone, four-square, remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down. A dull purple, poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of massy ruins, on whose rents the red light rests like dying fire on defiled altars. The blue ridge of the Alban mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky. Watch-towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave.

Let us, with Claude, make a few "ideal" alterations in this landscape. First, we will reduce the multitudinous precipices of the Apennines to four sugar-loaves. Secondly, we will remove the Alban mount, and put a large dust-heap in its stead. Next, we will knock down the greater part of the aqueducts, and leave only an arch or two, that their infinity of length may no longer be painful from its monotony. For the purple mist and declining sun, we will substitute a bright blue sky, with round white clouds. Finally, we will get rid of the unpleasant ruins in the foreground ; we will plant some handsome trees therein, we will send for some fiddlers, and get up a dance, and a picnic party.

It will be found, throughout the picture, that the same species of improvement is made on the materials which Claude had ready to his hand. The descending slopes of the city of Rome, towards the pyramid of Caius Cestius, supply not only lines of the most exquisite variety and beauty, but matter for contemplation and reflection in every fragment of their buildings. This passage has been idealized by Claude into a set of similar round towers, respecting which no idea can be formed but that they are uninhabitable, and to which no interest can be attached, beyond the difficulty of conjecturing what they could have been built for. The ruins of the temple are rendered unimpressive by the juxtaposition of the water-mill, and inexplicable by the introduction of the Roman soldiers. The glide of the muddy streams of the melancholy Tiber and Anio through the Campagna, is impressive in itself, but altogether ceases to

be so, when we disturb their stillness of motion by a weir, adorn their neglected flow with a handsome bridge, and cover their solitary surface with punts, nets, and fishermen.

It cannot, I think, be expected, that landscapes like this should have any effect on the human heart, except to harden or to degrade it ; to lead it from the love of what is simple, earnest and pure, to what is as sophisticated and corrupt in arrangement, as erring and imperfect in detail. So long as such works are held up for imitation, landscape painting must be a manufacture, its productions must be toys, and its patrons must be children.

My purpose then, in the present work, is to demonstrate the utter falseness both of the facts and principles ; the imperfection of material, and error of arrangement, on which works such as these are based ; and to insist on the necessity, as well as the dignity, of an earnest, faithful, loving, study of nature as she is, rejecting with abhorrence all that man has done to alter and modify her. And the praise which, in this first portion of the work, is given to many English artists, would be justifiable on this ground only, that although frequently with little power and desultory effort, they have yet, in an honest and good heart, received the word of God from clouds, and leaves, and waves, and kept it,* and endeavored in humility to render to the world

* The feelings of Constable with respect to his art might be almost a model for the young student, were it not that they err a little on the other side, and are perhaps in need of chastening and guiding from the works of his fellow-men. We should use pictures not as authorities, but as comments on nature, just as we use divines, not as authorities, but as comments on the Bible. Constable, in his dread of saint-worship, excommunicates himself from all benefit of the Church, and deprives himself of much instruction from the Scripture to which he holds, because he will not accept aid in the reading of it from the learning of other men. Sir George Beaumont, on the contrary, furnishes, in the anecdotes given of him in Constable's life, a melancholy instance of the degradation into which the human mind may fall, when it suffers human works to interfere between it and its Master. The recommending the color of an old Cremona fiddle for the prevailing tone of everything, and the vapid inquiry of the conventionalist, "Where do you put your brown tree?" show a prostration of intellect so laughable and lamentable, that they are at once, on all, and to all, students of the gallery, a satire and a warning. Art so followed is the most servile indolence in which life can be wasted. There are then two dangerous extremes to be shunned,—forgetfulness of the Scripture, and scorn of the divine—slavery on the one hand, free-thinking on the other. The mean is nearly as

that purity of impression which can alone render the result of art an instrument of good, or its labor deserving of gratitude.

If, however, I shall have frequent occasion to insist on the necessity of this heartfelt love of, and unqualified submission to, the teaching of nature, it will be no less incumbent upon me to reprobate the careless rendering of casual impression, and the mechanical copyism of unimportant subject, which are too frequently visible in our modern school.* Their lightness and de-

difficult to determine or keep in art as in religion, but the great danger is on the side of superstition. He who walks humbly with Nature will seldom be in danger of losing sight of Art. He will commonly find in all that is truly great of man's works, something of their original, for which he will regard them with gratitude, and sometimes follow them with respect ; while he who takes Art for his authority may entirely lose sight of all that it interprets, and sink at once into the sin of an idolater, and the degradation of a slave.

* I should have insisted more on this fault (for it is a fatal one) in the following Essay, but the cause of it rests rather with the public than with the artist, and in the necessities of the public as much as in their will. Such pictures as artists themselves would wish to paint, could not be executed under very high prices ; and it must always be easier, in the present state of society, to find ten purchasers of ten-guinea sketches, than one purchaser for a hundred-guinea picture. Still, I have been often both surprised and grieved to see that any effort on the part of our artists to rise above manufacture—any struggle to something like completed conception—was left by the public to be its own reward. In the water-color exhibition of last year there was a noble work of David Cox's, ideal in the right sense—a forest hollow with a few sheep crushing down through its deep fern, and a solemn opening of evening sky above its dark masses of distance. It was worth all his little bits on the walls put together. Yet the public picked up all the little bits—blots and splashes, ducks, chickweed, ears of corn—all that was clever and petite ; and the real picture—the full development of the artist's mind—was left on his hands. How can I, or any one else, with a conscience, advise him after this to aim at anything more than may be struck out by the cleverness of a quarter of an hour. Cattermole, I believe, is earthed and shackled in the same manner. He began his career with finished and studied pictures, which, I believe, never paid him—he now prostitutes his fine talent to the superficialness of public taste, and blots his way to emolument and oblivion. There is commonly, however, fault on both sides ; in the artist for exhibiting his dexterity by mountebank tricks of the brush, until chaste finish, requiring ten times the knowledge and labor, appears insipid to the diseased taste which he has himself formed in his patrons, as the roaring and ranting of a common actor will oftentimes render apparently vapid the finished touches of perfect nature ; and in the public, for taking less real pains to become acquainted with, and discriminate, the various powers of a great artist, than they would to estimate the excellence of a cook or develop the dexterity of a dancer.

sultoriness of intention, their meaningless multiplication of unstudied composition, and their want of definiteness and loftiness of aim, bring discredit on their whole system of study, and encourage in the critic the unhappy prejudice that the field and the hill-side are less fit places of study than the gallery and the garret. Not every casual idea caught from the flight of a shower or the fall of a sunbeam, not every glowing fragment of harvest light, nor every flickering dream of copsewood coolness, is to be given to the world as it came, unconsidered, incomplete, and forgotten by the artist as soon as it has left his easel. That only should be considered a picture, in which the spirit, (not the materials, observe,) but the animating emotion of many such studies is concentrated, and exhibited by the aid of long-studied, painfully-chosen forms; idealized in the right sense of the word, not by audacious liberty of that faculty of degrading God's works which man calls his "imagination," but by perfect assertion of entire knowledge of every part and character and function of the object, and in which the details are completed to the last line compatible with the dignity and simplicity of the whole, wrought out with that noblest industry which concentrates profusion into point, and transforms accumulation into structure; neither must this labor be bestowed on every subject which appears to afford a capability of good, but on chosen subjects in which nature has prepared to the artist's hand the purest sources of the impression he would convey. These may be humble in their order, but they must be perfect of their kind. There is a perfection of the hedgerow and cottage, as well as of the forest and the palace, and more ideality in a great artist's selection and treatment of roadside weeds and brook-worn pebbles, than in all the struggling caricature of the meaner mind which heaps its foreground with colossal columns, and heaves impossible mountains into the encumbered sky. Finally, these chosen subjects must not be in any way repetitions of one another, but each founded on a new idea, and developing a totally distinct train of thought: so that the work of the artist's life should form a consistent series of essays, rising through the scale of creation from the humblest scenery to the most exalted; each picture being a necessary link in the chain, based on what preceded, introducing to what is to follow, and all, in their lovely system, exhibiting and drawing closer the bonds of nature to the human heart.

Since, then, I shall have to reprobate the absence of study in the moderns nearly as much as its false direction in the ancients, my task will naturally divide itself into three portions. In the first, I shall endeavor to investigate and arrange the facts of nature with scientific accuracy ; showing as I proceed, by what total neglect of the very first base and groundwork of their art the idealities of some among the old masters are produced. This foundation once securely laid, I shall proceed, in the second portion of the work, to analyze and demonstrate the nature of the emotions of the Beautiful and Sublime ; to examine the particular characters of every kind of scenery, and to bring to light, as far as may be in my power, that faultless, ceaseless, inconceivable, inexhaustible loveliness, which God has stamped upon all things, if man will only receive them as He gives them. Finally, I shall endeavor to trace the operation of all this on the hearts and minds of men ; to exhibit the moral function and end of art, to prove the share which it ought to have in the thoughts, and influence on the lives of all of us ; to attach to the artist the responsibility of a preacher, and to kindle in the general mind that regard which such an office must demand.

It must be evident that the first portion of this task, which is all that I have yet been enabled to offer to the reader, cannot but be the least interesting and the most laborious, especially because it is necessary that it should be executed without reference to any principles of beauty or influences of emotion. It is the hard, straightforward classification of material things, not the study of thought or passion ; and therefore let me not be accused of the feelings which I choose to repress. The consideration of the high qualities of art must not be interrupted by the work of the hammer and the eudiometer.

Again, I would request that the frequent passages of reference to the great masters of the Italian school may not be looked upon as mere modes of conventional expression. I think there is enough in the following pages to prove that I am not likely to be carried away by the celebrity of a name ; and therefore that the devoted love which I profess for the works of the great historical and sacred painters is sincere and well-grounded. And indeed every principle of art which I may advocate, I shall be able to illustrate by reference to the works of men universally allowed to be the masters of masters ; and the public, so long as my teaching leads them to higher understanding and love of the

works of Buonaroti, Leonardo, Raffaele, Titian, and Cagliari, may surely concede to me without fear, the right of striking such blows as I may deem necessary to the establishment of my principles, at Gasper Poussin, or Vandevelde.

Indeed, I believe there is nearly as much occasion, at the present day, for advocacy of Michael Angelo against the pettiness of the moderns, as there is for support of Turner against the conventionalities of the ancients. For, though the names of the fathers of sacred art are on all our lips, our faith in them is much like that of the great world in its religion—nominal, but dead. In vain our lecturers sound the name of Raffaele in the ears of their pupils, while their own works are visibly at variance with every principle deducible from his. In vain is the young student compelled to produce a certain number of school copies of Michael Angelo, when his bread must depend on the number of gewgaws he can crowd into his canvas. And I could with as much zeal exert myself against the modern system of English historical art, as I have in favor of our school of landscape, but that it is an ungrateful and painful task to attack the works of living painters, struggling with adverse circumstances of every kind, and especially with the false taste of a nation which regards matters of art either with the ticklishness of an infant, or the stolidity of a Megatherium.

I have been accused, in the execution of this first portion of my work, of irreverent and scurrile expression towards the works which I have depreciated. Possibly I may have been in some degree infected by reading those criticisms of our periodicals, which consist of nothing else; but I believe in general that my words will be found to have sufficient truth in them to excuse their familiarity; and that no other weapons could have been used to pierce the superstitious prejudice with which the works of certain painters are shielded from the attacks of reason. My answer is that given long ago to a similar complaint, uttered under the same circumstances by the foiled sophist:—
 (“Ὁς δ’ ἔστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος; ὡς ἀπαίδευτός τις, ὅς οὐκ ὠκνῶν φαντασθέντα ὀνόματα ὀνομάζειν τολμᾷ ἐν σεμνῶν πράγματι.) Τοιοῦτός τις, ὦ Ἰππία, οὐδὲν ἄλλο φροντίζων ἢ τὸ ἀληθές.”

It is with more surprise that I have heard myself accused of thoughtless severity with respect to the works of contemporary painters, for I fully believe that whenever I attack them, I give myself far more pain than I can possibly inflict; and, in many

instances, I have withheld reprobation which I considered necessary to the full understanding of my work, in the fear of grieving or injuring men of whose feelings and circumstances I was ignorant. Indeed, the apparently false and exaggerated bias of the whole book in favor of modern art, is in great degree dependent on my withholding the animadversions which would have given it balance, and keeping silence where I cannot praise. But I had rather be a year or two longer in effecting my purposes, than reach them by trampling on men's hearts and hearths; and I have permitted myself to express unfavorable opinions only where the popularity and favor of the artist are so great as to render the opinion of an individual a matter of indifference to him.

And now—but one word more. For many a year we have heard nothing with respect to the works of Turner but accusations of their want of *truth*. To every observation on their power, sublimity, or beauty, there has been but one reply: They are not like nature. I therefore took my opponents on their own ground, and demonstrated, by thorough investigation of actual facts, that Turner *is* like nature, and paints more of nature than any man who ever lived. I expected this proposition (the foundation of all my future efforts) would have been disputed with desperate struggles, and that I should have had to fight my way to my position inch by inch. Not at all. My opponents yield me the field at once. One (the writer for the Athenæum) has no other resource than the assertion, that “he disapproves the natural style in painting. If people want to see *nature*, let them go and look at herself. Why should they see her at second-hand on a piece of canvas?” The other, (Blackwood,) still more utterly discomfited, is reduced to a still more remarkable line of defence. “It is not,” he says, “what things in all respects really are, but how they are convertible by the mind into what they are *not*, that we have to consider.” (October, 1843, p. 485.) I leave therefore the reader to choose whether, with Blackwood and his fellows, he will proceed to consider how things are convertible by the mind into what they are *not*, or whether, with me, he will undergo the harder, but perhaps on the whole more useful, labor of ascertaining—What they are.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IT is with much regret, and partly against my own judgment, that I republish the following chapters in their present form. The particular circumstances (stated in the first preface) under which they were originally written, have rendered them so unfit for the position they now hold as introductory to a serious examination of the general functions of art, that I should have wished first to complete the succeeding portions of the essay, and then to write another introduction of more fitting character. But as it may be long before I am able to do this, and as I believe what I have already written may still be of some limited and partial service, I have suffered it to reappear, trusting to the kindness of the reader to look to its intention rather than its temper, and forgive its inconsideration in its earnestness.

Thinking it of too little substance to bear mending, wherever I have found a passage which I thought required modification or explanation, I have cut it out ; what I have left, however imperfect, cannot I think be dangerously misunderstood : something I have added, not under the idea of rendering the work in any wise systematic or complete, but to supply gross omissions, answer inevitable objections, and give some substance to passages of mere declamation.

Whatever inadequacy or error there may be, throughout, in materials or modes of demonstration, I have no doubt of the truth and necessity of the main result ; and though the reader may, perhaps, find me frequently hereafter showing other and better grounds for what is here affirmed, yet the point and bearing of the book, its determined depreciation of Claude, Salvator, Gaspar, and Canaletto, and its equally determined support of Turner as the greatest of all landscape painters, and of Turner's

recent works as his finest, are good and right ; and if the prevalence throughout of attack and eulogium be found irksome or offensive, let it be remembered that my object thus far has not been either the establishment or the teaching of any principles of art, but the vindication, most necessary to the prosperity of our present schools, of the uncomprehended rank of their greatest artist, and the diminution, equally necessary as I think to the prosperity of our schools, of the unadvised admiration of the landscape of the seventeenth century. For I believe it to be almost impossible to state in terms sufficiently serious and severe the depth and extent of the evil which has resulted (and that not in art alone, but in all other matters with which the contemplative faculties are concerned) from the works of those elder men. On the continent all landscape art has been utterly annihilated by them, and with it all sense of the power of nature. We in England have only done better because our artists have had strength of mind enough to form a school withdrawn from their influence.

These points are somewhat farther developed in the general sketch of ancient and modern landscape, which I have added to the first section of the second part. Some important additions have also been made to the chapters on the painting of sea. Throughout the rest of the text, though something is withdrawn, little is changed ; and the reader may rest assured that if I were now to bestow on this feeble essay the careful revision which it much needs, but little deserves, it would not be to alter its tendencies, or modify its conclusions, but to prevent indignation from appearing virulence on the one side, and enthusiasm partisanship on the other.

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION (1873).

I HAVE been lately so often asked by friends on whose judgment I can rely, to permit the publication of another edition of "Modern Painters" in its original form, that I have at last yielded, though with some violence to my own feelings ; for many parts of the first and second volumes are written in a narrow enthusiasm, and the substance of their metaphysical and religious speculation is only justifiable on the ground of its absolute honesty. Of the third, fourth, and fifth volumes I indeed mean eventually to rearrange what I think of permanent interest, for the complete edition of my works, but with fewer and less elaborate illustrations : nor have I any serious grounds for refusing to allow the book once more to appear in the irregular form which it took as it was written, since of the art-teaching and landscape description it contains I have little to retrench, and nothing to retract.

This final edition must, however, be limited to a thousand copies, for some of the more delicate plates are already worn, that of the Mill Stream in the fifth volume, and of the Loire Side very injuriously ; while that of the Shores of Wharfe had to be retouched by an engraver after the removal of the mezzotint for reprinting. But Mr. Armytage's, Mr. Cousen's, and Mr. Cuff's magnificent plates are still in good state, and my own etchings, though injured, are still good enough to answer their purpose.

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MODERN PAINTERS.

PART I. OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

SECTION I. OF THE NATURE OF THE IDEAS CONVEYABLE BY ART.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IF it be true, and it can scarcely be disputed, that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that while the fancies and feelings which deny deserved honor and award what is undue have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind, descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump, and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this gradual victory of what is consistent

§ 1. Public opinion
no criterion of ex-
cellence, except
after long periods
of time.

over what is vacillating, depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature. For it is an insult to what is really great in either, to suppose that it in any way addresses itself to mean or uncultivated faculties. It is a matter of the simplest demonstration, that no man can be really appreciated but by his equal or superior. His inferior may over-estimate him in enthusiasm ; or, as is more commonly the case, degrade him, in ignorance ; but he cannot form a grounded and just estimate. Without proving this, however—which it would take more space to do than I can spare—it is sufficiently evident that there is no process of amalgamation by which opinions, wrong individually, can become right merely by their multitude.* If I stand by a picture in the Academy, and hear twenty persons in succession admiring some paltry piece of mechanism or imitation in the lining of a cloak, or the satin of a slipper, it is absurd to tell me that they reprobate collectively what they admire individually : or, if they pass with apathy by a piece of the most noble conception or most perfect truth, because it has in it no tricks of the brush nor grimace of expression, it is absurd to tell me that they collectively respect what they separately scorn, or that the feelings and knowledge of such judges, by any length of time or comparison of ideas, could come to any right conclusion with respect to what is really high in art. The question is not decided by them, but for them ;—decided at first by few : by fewer in proportion as the merits of the work are of a higher order. From these few the decision is communicated to the number next below them in rank of mind, and by these again to a wider and lower circle ; each rank being so far cognizant of the superiority of that above it, as to receive its decision with respect ; until, in process of time, the right and consistent opinion is communicated to all, and held by all as a matter of faith, the more positively in proportion as the grounds of it are less perceived.†

* The opinion of a majority is right only when it is more probable with each individual that he should be right than that he should be wrong, as in the case of a jury. Where it is more probable, with respect to each individual, that he should be wrong than right, the opinion of the minority is the true one. Thus it is in art.

† There are, however, a thousand modifying circumstances which ren-

But when this process has taken place, and the work has become sanctified by time in the minds of men, it is impossible

der this process sometimes unnecessary,—sometimes rapid and certain—sometimes impossible. It is unnecessary in rhetoric and the drama, because the multitude is the only proper judge of those arts whose end is to move the multitude (though more is necessary to a fine play than is essentially dramatic, and it is only of the dramatic part that the multitude are cognizant). It is unnecessary, when, united with the higher qualities of a work, there are appeals to universal passion, to all the faculties and feelings which are general in man as an animal. The popularity is then as sudden as it is well grounded,—it is hearty and honest in every mind, but it is based in every mind on a different species of excellence. Such will often be the case with the noblest works of literature. Take *Don Quixote* for example. The lowest mind would find in it perpetual and brutal amusement in the misfortunes of the knight, and perpetual pleasure in sympathy with the squire. A mind of average feeling would perceive the satirical meaning and force of the book, would appreciate its wit, its elegance, and its truth. But only elevated and peculiar minds discover, in addition to all this, the full moral beauty of the love and truth which are the constant associates of all that is even most weak and erring in the character of its hero, and pass over the rude adventure and scurrile jest in haste—perhaps in pain, to penetrate beneath the rusty corselet, and catch from the wandering glance the evidence and expression of fortitude, self-devotion, and universal love. So, again, with the works of Scott and Byron; popularity was as instant as it was deserved, because there is in them an appeal to those passions which are universal in all men, as well as an expression of such thoughts as can be received only by the few. But they are admired by the majority of their advocates for the weakest parts of their works, as a popular preacher by the majority of his congregation for the worst part of his sermon.

The process is rapid and certain, when, though there may be little to catch the multitude at once, there is much which they can enjoy when their attention is authoritatively directed to it. So rests the reputation of Shakspeare. No ordinary mind can comprehend wherein his undisputed superiority consists, but there is yet quite as much to amuse, thrill, or excite,—quite as much of what is, in the strict sense of the word, dramatic, in his works as in any one else's. They were received, therefore, when first written, with average approval, as works of common merit: but when the high decision was made, and the circle spread, the public took up the hue and cry conscientiously enough. Let them have daggers, ghosts, clowns, and kings, and with such real and definite sources of enjoyment, they will take the additional trouble to learn half a dozen quotations, without understanding them, and admit the superiority of Shakspeare without further demur. Nothing, perhaps, can more completely demonstrate the total ignorance

that any new work of equal merit can be impartially compared with it, except by minds not only educated and generally capable of appreciating merit, but strong enough to shake off the weight of prejudice and association, which § 2. And therefore obstinate when once formed. invariably incline them to the older favorite. It is much easier, says Barry, to repeat the character recorded of Phidias, than to investigate the merits of Agasias. And when, as peculiarly in the case of painting, much knowledge of what is technical and practical is necessary to a right judgment, so that those alone are competent to pronounce a true verdict who are themselves the persons to be judged, and who therefore can give no opinion, centuries may elapse before fair comparison can be made between two artists of different ages; while the patriarchal excellence exercises during the interval a tyrannical—perhaps, even a blighting, influence over the minds, both of the public and of those to whom, properly understood, it should serve for a guide and example. In no city of Europe where art is a subject of attention, are its prospects so hopeless, or its pursuits so resultless, as in Rome; because there, among all students, the authority of their predecessors in art is supreme and without appeal, and the mindless copyist studies Raffaelle, but not what Raffaelle studied. It thus becomes the duty of every one capable of demonstrating any definite points

of the public of all that is great or valuable in Shakspeare than their universal admiration of Maclise's Hamlet.

The process is impossible when there is in the work nothing to attract and something to disgust the vulgar mind. Neither their intrinsic excellence, nor the authority of those who can judge of it, will ever make the poems of Wordsworth or George Herbert popular, in the sense in which Scott and Byron are popular, because it is to the vulgar a labor instead of a pleasure to read them; and there are parts in them which to such judges cannot but be rapid or ridiculous. Most works of the highest art,—those of Raffaelle, M. Angelo, or Da Vinci,—stand as Shakspeare does,—that which is commonplace and feeble in their excellence being taken for its essence by the uneducated, imagination assisting the impression, (for we readily fancy that we feel, when feeling is a matter of pride or conscience,) and affectation and pretension increasing the noise of the rapture, if not its degree. Giotto, Orgagna, Angelico, Perugino, stand, like George Herbert, only with the few. Wilkie becomes popular, like Scott, because he touches passions which all feel, and expresses truths which all can recognize.

of superiority in modern art, and who is in a position in which his doing so will not be ungraceful, to encounter without hesita-

tion whatever opprobrium may fall upon him from the necessary prejudice even of the most candid minds, and from the far more virulent opposition of those who have no hope of maintaining their own reputation for discernment but in the support of that kind of consecrated merit which may be applauded without an inconvenient necessity for reasons. It is my purpose, therefore, believing that there are certain points of superiority in modern artists, and especially in one or two of their number, which have not yet been fully understood, except by those who are scarcely in a position admitting the declaration of their conviction, to institute a close comparison between the great works of ancient and modern landscape art, to raise, as far as possible, the deceptive veil of imaginary light through which we are accustomed to gaze upon the patriarchal work, and to show the real relations, whether favorable or otherwise, subsisting between it and our own. I am fully aware that this is not to be done lightly or rashly; that it is the part of every one proposing to undertake such a task strictly to examine, with prolonged doubt and severe trial, every opinion in any way contrary to the sacred verdict of time, and to advance nothing which does not, at least in his own conviction, rest on surer ground than mere feeling or taste. I have accordingly advanced nothing in the following pages but with accompanying demonstration, which may indeed be true or false—complete or conditional, but which can only be met on its own grounds, and can in no way be borne down or affected by mere authority of great names. Yet even thus I should scarcely have ventured to speak so decidedly as I have, but for my full conviction that we ought not to class the historical painters of the fifteenth, and landscape painters of the seventeenth, centuries, together, under the general title of “old masters,” as if they possessed anything like corresponding rank in their respective walks of art. I feel assured that the principles on which they worked are totally opposed, and that the landscape painters have been honored only because they exhibited in mechanical and technical qualities some semblance of the

§ 3. The author's reasons for opposing it in particular instances.

§ 4 But only on points capable of demonstration.

manner of the nobler historical painters, whose principles of conception and composition they entirely reversed. The course of study which has led me reverently to the feet of Michael Angelo and Da Vinci, has alienated me gradually from Claude and Gaspar—I cannot at the same time do homage to power and pettiness—to the truth of consummate science, and the mannerism of undisciplined imagination. And let it be understood that whenever hereafter I speak depreciatingly of the old masters as a body, I refer to none of the historical painters, for whom I entertain a veneration, which though I hope reasonable in its grounds, is almost superstitious in degree. Neither, unless he be particularly mentioned, do I intend to include Nicholas Poussin, whose landscapes have a separate and elevated character, which renders it necessary to consider them apart from all others. Speaking generally of the older masters, I refer only to Claude, Gaspar Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Cuyp, Berghem, Both, Ruysdael, Hobbima, Teniers, (in his landscapes,) P. Potter, Canaletti, and the various Van somethings, and Back somethings, more especially and malignantly those who have libelled the sea.

It will of course be necessary for me in the commencement of the work to state briefly those principles on which I conceive all right judgment of art must be founded. These introductory chapters I should wish to be read carefully, because all criticism must be useless when the terms or grounds of it are in any degree ambiguous; and the ordinary language of connoisseurs and critics, granting that they understand it themselves, is usually mere jargon to others, from their custom of using technical terms, by which everything is meant, and nothing is expressed.

§ 5. The author's partiality to modern works excusable.

And if, in the application of these principles, in spite of my endeavor to render it impartial, the feeling and fondness which I have for some works of modern art escape me sometimes where it should not, let it be pardoned as little more than a fair counterbalance to that peculiar veneration with which the work of the older master, associated as it has ever been in our ears with the expression of whatever is great or perfect, must be usually regarded by the reader. I do not say that this veneration is wrong, nor that we

should be less attentive to the repeated words of time : but let us not forget, that if honor be for the dead, gratitude can only be for the living. He who has once stood beside the grave, to look back upon the companionship which has been forever closed, feeling how impotent *there* are the wild love, or the keen sorrow, to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart, or atone in the lowest measure to the departed spirit for the hour of unkindness, will scarcely for the future incur that debt to the heart, which can only be discharged to the dust. But the lesson which men receive as individuals, they do not learn as nations. Again and again they have seen their noblest descend into the grave, and have thought it enough to garland the tombstone when they had not crowned the brow, and to pay the honor to the ashes, which they had denied to the spirit. Let it not displease them that they are bidden, amidst the tumult and the dazzle of their busy life, to listen for the few voices, and watch for the few lamps, which God has toned and lighted to charm and to guide them, that they may not learn their sweetness by their silence, nor their light by their decay.

CHAPTER II.

DEFINITION OF GREATNESS IN ART.

IN the 15th Lecture of Sir Joshua Reynolds, incidental notice is taken of the distinction between those excellences in the painter which belong to him *as such*, and those which belong to him in common with all men of intellect, the general and exalted powers of which art is the evidence and expression, not the subject. But the distinction is not there dwelt upon as it should be, for it is owing to the slight attention ordinarily paid to it, that criticism is open to every form of coxcombry, and liable to every phase of error. It is a distinction on which depend all sound judgment of the rank of the artist, and all just appreciation of the dignity of art.

§ 1. Distinction between the painter's intellectual power and technical knowledge.

Painting, or art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing. He who has learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much towards being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learned how to express himself grammatically and melodiously has towards being a great poet. The language is, indeed, more difficult of acquirement in the one case than in the other, and possesses more power of delighting the sense, while it speaks to the intellect, but it is, nevertheless, nothing more than language, and all those excellences which are peculiar to the painter as such, are merely what rhythm, melody, precision and force are in the words of the orator and the poet, necessary to their greatness, but not the

§ 2. Painting, as such, is nothing more than language.

tests of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined.

Speaking with strict propriety, therefore, we should call a man a great painter only as he excelled in precision and force in the language of lines, and a great versifier, as he excelled in precision or force in the language of words. A great poet would then be a term strictly, and in precisely the same sense applicable to both, if warranted by the character of the images or thoughts which each in their respective languages convey.

Take, for instance, one of the most perfect poems or pictures (I use the words as synonymous) which modern times have seen :—the “ Old Shepherd’s Chief-mourner.” Here the exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear painting of the wood of the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog’s breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid, close and motionless, upon its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin-lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life—how unwatched the departure of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep ;—these are all thoughts—thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from hundreds of equal merit, as far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin, or the fold of a drapery, but as the Man of Mind.

It is not, however, always easy, either in painting or literature, to determine where the influence of language stops, and where that of thought begins. Many thoughts are so dependent upon the

§ 3. “ Painter,” a term corresponding to “ versifier.”

§ 4. Example in a painting of E. Landseer’s.

§ 5. Difficulty of fixing an exact limit between language and thought.

language in which they are clothed, that they would lose half their beauty if otherwise expressed. But the highest thoughts are those which are least dependent on language, and the dignity of any composition and praise to which it is entitled, are in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression. A composition is indeed usually most perfect, when to such intrinsic dignity is added all that expression can do to attract and adorn ; but in every case of supreme excellence this all becomes as nothing. We are more gratified by the simplest lines or words which can suggest the idea in its own naked beauty, than by the robe or the gem which conceal while they decorate ; we are better pleased to feel by their absence how little they could bestow, than by their presence how much they can destroy.

§ 6. Distinction
between decorative
and expressive
language.

There is therefore a distinction to be made between what is ornamental in language and what is expressive. That part of it which is necessary to the embodying and conveying the thought is worthy of respect and attention as necessary to excellence, though not the test of it. But that part of it which is decorative has little more to do with the intrinsic excellence of the picture than the frame or the varnishing of it. And this caution in distinguishing between the ornamental and the expressive is peculiarly necessary in painting ; for in the language of words it is nearly impossible for that which is not expressive to be beautiful, except by mere rhythm or melody, any sacrifice to which is immediately stigmatized as error. But the beauty of mere language in painting is not only very attractive and entertaining to the spectator, but requires for its attainment no small exertion of mind and devotion of time by the artist. Hence, in art, men have frequently fancied that they were becoming rhetoricians and poets when they were only learning to speak melodiously, and the judge has over and over again advanced to the honor of authors those who were never more than ornamental writing-masters.

§ 7. Instance in
the Dutch and
early Italian
schools.

Most pictures of the Dutch school, for instance, excepting always those of Rubens, Vandyke, and Rembrandt, are ostentatious exhibitions of the artist's power of speech, the clear and vigorous elocution of useless and senseless words : while the early efforts of Cimabue and

Giotto are the burning messages of prophecy, delivered by the stammering lips of infants. It is not by ranking the former as more than mechanics, or the latter as less than artists, that the taste of the multitude, always awake to the lowest pleasures which art can bestow, and blunt to the highest, is to be formed or elevated. It must be the part of the judicious critic carefully to distinguish what is language, and what is thought, and to rank and praise pictures chiefly for the latter, considering the former as a totally inferior excellence, and one which cannot be compared with nor weighed against thought in any way nor in any degree whatsoever. The picture which has the nobler and more numerous ideas, however awkwardly expressed, is a greater and a better picture than that which has the less noble and less numerous ideas, however beautifully expressed. No weight, nor mass, nor beauty of execution can outweigh one grain or fragment of thought. Three penstrokes of Raffaele are a greater and a better picture than the most finished work that ever Carlo Dolci polished into inanity. A finished work of a great artist is only better than its sketch, if the sources of pleasure belonging to color and realization—valuable in themselves,—are so employed as to increase the impressiveness of the thought. But if one atom of thought has vanished, all color, all finish, all execution, all ornament, are too dearly bought. Nothing but thought can pay for thought, and the instant that the increasing refinement or finish of the picture begins to be paid for by the loss of the faintest shadow of an idea, that instant all refinement or finish is an excrescence, and a deformity.

§8. Yet there are certain ideas belonging to language itself.

Yet although in all our speculations on art, language is thus to be distinguished from, and held subordinate to, that which it conveys, we must still remember that there are certain ideas inherent in language itself, and that strictly speaking, every pleasure connected with art has in it some reference to the intellect. The mere sensual pleasure of the eye, received from the most brilliant piece of coloring, is as nothing to that which it receives from a crystal prism, except as it depends on our perception of a certain meaning and intended arrangement of color, which has been the subject of intellect. Nay, the term idea, according to

Locke's definition of it, will extend even to the sensual impressions themselves as far as they are "things which the mind occupies itself about in thinking," that is, not as they are felt by the eye only, but as they are received by the mind through the eye. So that, if I say that the greatest picture is § 9. The defini-
tion. that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas, I have a definition which will include as subjects of comparison every pleasure which art is capable of conveying. If I were to say, on the contrary, that the best picture was that which most closely imitated nature, I should assume that art could only please by imitating nature, and I should cast out of the pale of criticism those parts of works of art which are not imitative, that is to say, intrinsic beauties of color and form, and those works of art wholly, which, like the arabesques of Raffaele in the Loggias, are not imitative at all. Now I want a definition of art wide enough to include all its varieties of aim : I do not say therefore that the art is greatest which gives most pleasure, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to teach, and not to please. I do not say that the art is greatest which teaches us most, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to please, and not to teach. I do not say that the art is greatest which imitates best, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to create, and not to imitate. But I say that the art is greatest, which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas, and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully occupies, and in occupying, exercises and exalts, the faculty by which it is received.

If this then be the definition of great art, that of a great artist naturally follows. He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas.

CHAPTER III.

OF IDEAS OF POWER.

THE definition of art which I have just given, requires me to determine what kinds of ideas can be received from works of art, and which of these are the greatest, before proceeding to any practical application of the test.

§ 1. What classes of ideas are conveyable by art.

I think that all the sources of pleasure, or any other good, to be derived from works of art, may be referred to five distinct heads.

- I. Ideas of Power.—The perception or conception of the mental or bodily powers by which the work has been produced.
- II. Ideas of Imitation.—The perception that the thing produced resembles something else.
- III. Ideas of Truth.—The perception of faithfulness in a statement of facts by the thing produced.
- IV. Ideas of Beauty.—The perception of beauty, either in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.
- V. Ideas of Relation.—The perception of intellectual relations, in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.

I shall briefly distinguish the nature and effects of each of these classes of ideas.

§ 2. Ideas of power vary much in relative dignity.

I. Ideas of Power.—These are the simple perception of the mental or bodily powers exerted in the production of any work of art. According to the dignity and degree of the power perceived is the dignity of the idea ; but the whole class of ideas is received by the intellect, and they excite the best of the moral feelings, veneration, and the desire of exertion. As a species, therefore, they are one of the noblest connected with art ; but the differences in degree of dignity among themselves are infinite, being correspondent with every order of power,—from that of the fingers to that of the most exalted intellect. Thus, when we see an

Indian's paddle carved from the handle to the blade, we have a conception of prolonged manual labor, and are gratified in proportion to the supposed expenditure of time and exertion. These are, indeed, powers of a low order, yet the pleasure arising from the conception of them enters very largely indeed into our admiration of all elaborate ornament, architectural decoration, etc. The delight with which we look on the fretted front of Rouen Cathedral depends in no small degree on the simple perception of time employed and labor expended in its production. But it is a right, that is, an ennobling pleasure, even in this its lowest phase; and even the pleasure felt by those persons who praise a drawing for its "finish," or its "work," which is one precisely of the same kind, would be right, if it did not imply a want of perception of the higher powers which render work unnecessary. If to the evidence of labor be added that of strength or dexterity, the sensation of power is yet increased; if to strength and dexterity be added that of ingenuity and judgment, it is multiplied tenfold, and so on, through all the subjects of action of body or mind, we receive the more exalted pleasure from the more exalted power.

§ 3. But are received from whatever has been the subject of power. The meaning of the word "excellence."

So far the nature and effects of ideas of power cannot but be admitted by all. But the circumstance which I wish especially to insist upon, with respect to them, is one which may not, perhaps, be so readily allowed, namely, that they are independent of the nature or worthiness of the object from which they are received, and that whatever has been the subject of a great power, whether there be intrinsic and apparent worthiness in itself or not, bears with it the evidence of having been so, and is capable of giving the ideas of power, and the consequent pleasures, in their full degree. For observe, that a thing is not properly said to have been the result of a great power, on which only some part of that power has been expended. A nut may be cracked by a steam-engine, but it has not, in being so, been the subject of the power of the engine. And thus it is falsely said of great men, that they waste their lofty powers on unworthy objects: the object may be dangerous or useless, but, as far as the phrase has reference to difficulty of performance, it cannot be unworthy of the power

which it brings into exertion, because nothing can become a subject of action to a greater power which can be accomplished by a less, any more than bodily strength can be exerted where there is nothing to resist it.

So then, men may let their great powers lie dormant, while they employ their mean and petty powers on mean and petty objects; but it is physically impossible to employ a great power, except on a great object. Consequently, wherever power of any kind or degree has been exerted, the marks and evidence of it are stamped upon its results: it is impossible that it should be lost or wasted, or without record, even in the "estimation of a hair:" and therefore, whatever has been the subject of a great power bears about with it the image of that which created it, and is what is commonly called "excellent." And this is the true meaning of the word excellent, as distinguished from the terms, "beautiful," "useful," "good," etc.; and we shall always, in future, use the word excellent, as signifying that the thing to which it is applied required a great power for its production.*

§ 4. What is necessary to the distinguishing of excellence.

The faculty of perceiving what powers are required for the production of a thing, is the faculty of perceiving excellence. It is this faculty in which men, even of the most cultivated taste, must always be wanting, unless they have added practice to reflection; because none can estimate the power manifested in victory, unless they have personally measured the strength to be overcome. Though, therefore, it is possible, by the cultivation of sensibility and judgment, to become capable of distinguishing what is beauti-

* Of course the word "excellent" is primarily a mere synonym with "surpassing," and when applied to persons, has the general meaning given by Johnson—"the state of abounding in any good quality." But when applied to things it has always reference to the power by which they are produced. We talk of excellent music or poetry, because it is difficult to compose or write such, but never of excellent flowers, because all flowers being the result of the same power, must be equally excellent. We distinguish them only as beautiful or useful, and therefore, as there is no other one word to signify that quality of a thing produced by which it pleases us merely as the result of power, and as the term "excellent" is more frequently used in this sense than in any other, I choose to limit it at once to this sense, and I wish it, when I use it in future, to be so understood.

ful, it is totally impossible, without practice and knowledge, to distinguish or feel what is excellent. The beauty or the truth of Titian's flesh-tint may be appreciated by all ; but it is only to the artist, whose multiplied hours of toil have not reached the slightest resemblance of one of its tones, that its *excellence* is manifest.

Wherever, then, difficulty has been overcome, there is excellence : and therefore, in order to prove a work excellent, we have only to prove the difficulty of its production : whether it be useful or beautiful is another question ; its excellence depends on its difficulty alone. Nor is it a false or diseased taste which looks for the overcoming of difficulties, and has pleasure in it, even without any view to resultant good. It has been made part of our moral nature that we should have a pleasure in encountering and conquering opposition, for the sake of the struggle and the victory, not for the sake of any after result ; and not only our own victory, but the perception of that of another, is in all cases the source of pure and ennobling pleasure. And if we often hear it said, and truly said, that an artist has erred by seeking rather to show his skill in overcoming technical difficulties, than to reach a great end, be it observed that he is only blamed because he has sought to conquer an inferior difficulty rather than a great one ; for it is much easier to overcome technical difficulties than to reach a great end. Whenever the visible victory over difficulties is found painful or in false taste, it is owing to the preference of an inferior to a great difficulty, or to the false estimate of what is difficult and what is not. It is far more difficult to be simple than to be complicated ; far more difficult to sacrifice skill and cease exertion in the proper place, than to expend both indiscriminately. We shall find, in the course of our investigation, that beauty and difficulty go together ; and that they are only mean and paltry difficulties which it is wrong or contemptible to wrestle with. Be it remembered then—Power is never wasted. Whatever power has been employed, produces excellence in proportion to its own dignity and exertion ; and the faculty of perceiving this exertion, and appreciating this dignity, is the faculty of perceiving excellence.

§ 5. The pleasure attendant on conquering difficulties is right.

CHAPTER IV.

OF IDEAS OF IMITATION.

FUSELI, in his lectures, and many other persons of equally just and accurate habits of thought, (among others, S. T. Coleridge,) make a distinction between imitation and copying,

§ 1. False use of the term "imitation" by many writers of art. representing the first as the legitimate function of art—the latter as its corruption; but as such a distinction is by no means warranted, or explained

by the common meaning of the words themselves, it is not easy to comprehend exactly in what sense they are used by those writers. And though, reasoning from the context, I can understand what ideas those words stand for in their minds, I cannot allow the terms to be properly used as symbols of those ideas, which (especially in the case of the word Imitation) are exceedingly complex, and totally different from what most people would understand by the term. And by men of less accurate thought, the word is used still more vaguely or falsely. For instance, Burke (Treatise on the Sublime, part i. sect. 16) says, "When the object represented in poetry or painting is such as we could have no desire of seeing in the reality, then we may be sure that its power in poetry or painting is owing to the power of *imitation*." In which case the real pleasure may be in what we have been just speaking of, the dexterity of the artist's hand; or it may be in a beautiful or singular arrangement of colors, or a thoughtful chiaroscuro, or in the pure beauty of certain forms which art forces on our notice, though we should not have observed them in the reality; and I conceive that none of these sources of pleasure are in any way expressed or intimated by the term "*imitation*."

But there is one source of pleasure in works of art totally different from all these, which I conceive to be properly and accurately expressed by the word "*imitation*:" one which, though

constantly confused in reasoning, because it is always associated in fact, with other means of pleasure, is totally separated from them in its nature, and is the real basis of whatever complicated or various meaning may be afterwards attached to the word in the minds of men.

I wish to point out this distinct source of pleasure clearly at once, and only to use the word "imitation" in reference to it.

§ 2. Real meaning of the term. Whenever anything looks like what it is not, the resemblance being so great as *nearly* to deceive, we feel a kind of pleasurable surprise, an agreeable excitement of mind, exactly the same in its nature as that which we receive from juggling. Whenever we perceive this in something produced by art, that is to say, whenever the work is seen to resemble something which we know it is not, we receive what I call an idea of imitation. *Why* such ideas are pleasing, it would be out of our present purpose to inquire; we only know that there is no man who does not feel pleasure in his animal nature from gentle surprise, and that such surprise can be excited in no more distinct manner than by the evidence that a thing is not

what it appears to be.* Now two things are requisite to our complete and more pleasurable perception of this: first, that the resemblance be so perfect as to amount to a deception; secondly, that there be some means of proving at the same moment that it is a deception. The most perfect ideas and pleasures of imitation are, therefore, when one sense is contradicted by another, both bearing as positive evidence on the subject as each is capable of alone; as when the eye says a thing is round, and the finger says it is flat; they are, therefore, never felt in so high a degree as in painting, where appearance of projection, roughness, hair, velvet, etc., are given with a smooth surface, or in wax-work, where the first evidence of the senses is perpetually contradicted by their experience; but the moment we come to marble, our definition checks us, for a marble figure does not look like what it is not: it looks like marble, and like the form of a man, but then it *is* marble, and it *is* the form of a man. It does not look like a man, which it is not, but like the form of a man, which it is. Form is form, *bona fide* and

§ 3. What is requisite to the sense of imitation.

what it appears to be.* Now two things are requisite to our complete and more pleasurable perception of this: first, that the resemblance be so perfect as to amount to a deception; secondly, that there be some means of proving at the same moment that it is a deception. The most perfect ideas and pleasures of imitation are, therefore, when one sense is contradicted by another, both bearing as positive evidence on the subject as each is capable of alone; as when the eye says a thing is round, and the finger says it is flat; they are, therefore, never felt in so high a degree as in painting, where appearance of projection, roughness, hair, velvet, etc., are given with a smooth surface, or in wax-work, where the first evidence of the senses is perpetually contradicted by their experience; but the moment we come to marble, our definition checks us, for a marble figure does not look like what it is not: it looks like marble, and like the form of a man, but then it *is* marble, and it *is* the form of a man. It does not look like a man, which it is not, but like the form of a man, which it is. Form is form, *bona fide* and

* συλλογισμός ἐστίν, ὅτι τὸντο ἐκεῖνο.—Arist. Rhet. 1, 11, 23.

actual, whether in marble or in flesh—not an imitation or resemblance of form, but real form. The chalk outline of the bough of a tree on paper, is not an imitation ; it looks like chalk and paper—not like wood, and that which it suggests to the mind is not properly said to be *like* the form of a bough, it *is* the form of a bough. Now, then, we see the limits of an idea of imitation ; it extends only to the sensation of trickery and deception occasioned by a thing's intentionally seeming different from what it is ; and the degree of the pleasure depends on the degree of difference and the perfection of the resemblance, not on the nature of the thing resembled. The simple pleasure in the imitation would be precisely of the same degree, (if the accuracy could be equal,) whether the subject of it were the hero or his horse. There are other collateral sources of pleasure, which are necessarily associated with this, but that part of the pleasure which depends on the imitation is the same in both.

§ 4. The pleasure resulting from imitation the most contemptible that can be derived from art.

Ideas of imitation, then, act by producing the simple pleasure of surprise, and that not of surprise in its higher sense and function, but of the mean and paltry surprise which is felt in jugglery. These ideas and pleasures are the most contemptible which can be received from art ; first, because it is necessary to their enjoyment that the mind should reject the impression and address of the thing represented, and fix itself only upon the reflection that it is not what it seems to be. All high or noble emotion or thought are thus rendered physically impossible, while the mind exults in what is very like a strictly sensual pleasure. We may consider tears as a result of agony or of art, whichever we please, but not of both at the same moment. If we are surprised by them as an attainment of the one, it is impossible we can be moved by them as a sign of the other.

§ 5. Imitation is only of contemptible subjects.

Ideas of imitation are contemptible in the second place, because not only do they preclude the spectator from enjoying inherent beauty in the subject, but they can only be received from mean and paltry subjects, because it is impossible to imitate anything really great. We can “ paint a cat or a fiddle, so that they look as if we could take them up ;” but we cannot imitate the ocean, or

the Alps. We can imitate fruit, but not a tree ; flowers, but not a pasture ; cut-glass, but not the rainbow. All pictures in which deceptive powers of imitation are displayed are therefore either of contemptible subjects, or have the imitation shown in contemptible parts of them, bits of dress, jewels, furniture, etc.

Thirdly, these ideas are contemptible, because § 6. Imitation is contemptible because it is easy. no ideas of power are associated with them ; to the ignorant, imitation, indeed, seems difficult, and its success praiseworthy, but even they can by no possibility see more in the artist than they do in a juggler, who arrives at a strange end by means with which they are unacquainted. To the instructed, the juggler is by far the more respectable artist of the two, for they know sleight of hand to be an art of immensely more difficult acquirement, and to imply more ingenuity in the artist than a power of deceptive imitation in painting, which requires nothing more for its attainment than a true eye, a steady hand, and moderate industry—qualities which in no degree separate the imitative artist from a watch-maker, pin-maker, or any other neat-handed artificer. These remarks do not apply to the art of the Diorama, or the stage, where the pleasure is not dependent on the imitation, but is the same which we should receive from nature herself, only far inferior in degree. It is a noble pleasure ; but we shall see in the course of our investigation, both that it is inferior to that which we receive when there is no deception at all, and why it is so.

§ 7. Recapitulation. Whenever then in future, I speak of ideas of imitation, I wish to be understood to mean the immediate and present perception that something produced by art is not what it seems to be. I prefer saying “that it is not what it seems to be,” to saying “that it seems to be what it is not,” because we perceive at once what it seems to be, and the idea of imitation, and the consequent pleasure, result from the subsequent perception of its being something else—flat, for instance, when we thought it was round.

CHAPTER V.

OF IDEAS OF TRUTH.

THE word truth, as applied to art, signifies the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature.

§ 1. Meaning of the word "truth" as applied to art. We receive an idea of truth, then, when we perceive the faithfulness of such a statement.

The difference between ideas of truth and of imitation lies chiefly in the following points.

§ 2. First difference between truth and imitation.

First,—Imitation can only be of something material, but truth has reference to statements both of the qualities of material things, and of emotions, impressions, and thoughts. There is a moral as well as material truth,—a truth of impression as well as of form,—of thought as well as of matter; and the truth of impression and thought is a thousand times the more important of the two. Hence, truth is a term of universal application, but imitation is limited to that narrow field of art which takes cognizance only of material things.

§ 3. Second difference.

Secondly,—Truth may be stated by any signs or symbols which have a definite signification in the minds of those to whom they are addressed, although such signs be themselves no image nor likeness of anything. Whatever can excite in the mind the conception of certain facts, can give ideas of truth, though it be in no degree the imitation or resemblance of those facts. If there be—we do not say there is—but if there be in painting anything which operates, as words do, not by resembling anything, but by being taken as a symbol and substitute for it, and thus inducing the effect of it, then this channel of communication can convey uncorrupted truth, though it do not in any degree resemble the facts whose conception it induces. But ideas of imitation, of course, require the likeness of the object. They speak to the perceptive faculties only : truth to the conceptive.

Thirdly,—And in consequence of what is above stated, an idea of truth exists in the statement of *one* attribute of anything, but an idea of imitation requires the resemblance of as many attributes as we are usually cognizant of in its real presence. A pencil outline of the bough of a tree on white paper is a statement of a certain number of facts of form. It does not yet amount to the imitation of anything. The idea of that form is not given in nature by lines at all, still less by black lines with a white space between them. But those lines convey to the mind a distinct impression of a certain number of facts, which it recognizes as agreeable with its previous impressions of the bough of a tree; and it receives, therefore, an idea of truth. If, instead of two lines, we give a dark form with the brush, we convey information of a certain relation of shade between the bough and sky, recognizable for another idea of truth; but we have still no imitation, for the white paper is not the least like air, nor the black shadow like wood. It is not until after a certain number of ideas of truth have been collected together, that we arrive at an idea of imitation.

§ 4. Third difference.
§ 5. No accurate truths necessary to imitation.

Hence it might at first sight appear, that an idea of imitation, inasmuch as several ideas of truth were united in it, was nobler than a simple idea of truth. And if it were necessary that the ideas of truth should be perfect, or should be subjects of contemplation *as such*, it would be so. But, observe, we require to produce the effect of imitation only so many and such ideas of truth as the *senses* are usually cognizant of. Now the senses are not usually, nor unless they be especially devoted to the service, cognizant, with accuracy, of any truths but those of space and projection. It requires long study and attention before they give certain evidence of even the simplest truths of form. For instance, the quay on which the figure is sitting, with his hand at his eyes, in Claude's seaport, No. 14, in the National Gallery, is egregiously out of perspective. The eye of this artist, with all his study, had thus not acquired the power of taking cognizance of the apparent form even of a simple parallelopiped. How much less of the complicated forms of boughs, leaves, or

limbs? Although, therefore, something resembling the real form is necessary to deception, this something is not to be called a *truth* of form; for, strictly speaking, there are no degrees of truth, there are only degrees of approach to it; and an approach to it, whose feebleness and imperfection would instantly offend and give pain to a mind really capable of distinguishing truth, is yet quite sufficient for all the purposes of deceptive imagination. It is the same with regard to color. If we were to paint a tree sky-blue, or a dog rose-pink, the discernment of the public would be keen enough to discover the falsehood; but, so that there be just so much approach to truth of color as may come up to the common idea of it in men's minds, that is to say, if the trees be all bright green, and flesh unbroken buff, and ground unbroken brown, though all the real and refined truths of color be wholly omitted, or rather defied and contradicted, there is yet quite enough for all purposes of imitation. The only facts then, which we are usually and certainly cognizant of, are those of distance and projection, and if these be tolerably given, with something like truth of form and color to assist them, the idea of imitation is complete. I would undertake to paint an arm, with every muscle out of its place, and every bone of false form and dislocated articulation, and yet to observe certain coarse and broad resemblances of true outline, which, with careful shading, would induce deception, and draw down the praise and delight of the discerning public. The other day at Bruges, while I was endeavoring to set down in my note-book something of the ineffable expression of the Madonna in the cathedral, a French amateur came up to me, to inquire if I had seen the modern French pictures in a neighboring church. I had not, but felt little inclined to leave my marble for all the canvas that ever suffered from French brushes. My apathy was attacked with gradually increasing energy of praise. Rubens never executed—Titian never colored anything like them. I thought this highly probable, and still sat quiet. The voice continued at my ear. “Parbleu, Monsieur, Michel Ange n’a rien produit de plus beau!” “De plus *beau*?” repeated I, wishing to know what particular excellences of Michael Angelo were to be in-

timated by this expression. “Monsieur, on ne peut plus—c’est un tableau admirable—inconceivable : Monsieur,” said the Frenchman, lifting up his hands to heaven, as he concentrated in one conclusive and overwhelming proposition the qualities which were to outshine Rubens and overpower Buonaroti—“Monsieur, IL SORT !”

This gentleman could only perceive two truths—flesh color and projection. These constituted his notion of the perfection of painting ; because they unite all that is necessary for deception. He was not therefore cognizant of many ideas of truth, though perfectly cognizant of ideas of imitation.

§ 6. Ideas of truth are inconsistent with ideas of imitation.

We shall see, in the course of our investigation of ideas of truth, that ideas of imitation not only do not imply their presence, but even are inconsistent with it ; and that pictures which imitate so as to deceive, are never true. But this is not the place for the proof of this ; at present we have only to insist on the last and greatest distinction between ideas of truth and of imitation—that the mind, in receiving one of the former, dwells upon its own conception of the fact, or form, or feeling stated, and is occupied only with the qualities and character of that fact or form, considering it as real and existing, being all the while totally regardless of the signs or symbols by which the notion of it has been conveyed. These signs have no pretence, nor hypocrisy, nor legerdemain about them ;—there is nothing to be found out, or sifted, or surprised in them ;—they bear their message simply and clearly, and it is that message which the mind takes from them and dwells upon, regardless of the language in which it is delivered. But the mind, in receiving an idea of imitation, is wholly occupied in finding out that what has been suggested to it is not what it appears to be : it does not dwell on the suggestion, but on the perception that it is a false suggestion : it derives its pleasure, not from the contemplation of a truth, but from the discovery of a falsehood. So that the moment ideas of truth are grouped together, so as to give rise to an idea of imitation, they change their very nature—lose their essence as ideas of truth—and are corrupted and degraded, so as to share in the treachery of what they have produced. Hence, finally, ideas of truth are

the foundation, and ideas of imitation the destruction, of all art. We shall be better able to appreciate their relative dignity after the investigation which we propose of the functions of the former ; but we may as well now express the conclusion to which we shall then be led—that no picture can be good which deceives by its imitation, for the very reason that nothing can be beautiful which is not true.

CHAPTER VI.

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

ANY material object which can give us pleasure in the simple contemplation of its outward qualities without any direct and definite exertion of the intellect, I call in some way, or in some degree, beautiful. Why we receive pleasure from some forms and colors, and not from others, is no more to be asked or answered than why we like sugar and dislike wormwood. The utmost subtilty of investigation will only lead us to ultimate instincts and principles of human nature, for which no farther reason can be given than the simple will of the Deity that we should be so created. We may, indeed, perceive, as far as we are acquainted with His nature, that we have been so constructed as, when in a healthy and cultivated state of mind, to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature; but we do not receive pleasure from them *because* they are illustrative of it, nor from any perception that they are illustrative of it, but instinctively and necessarily, as we derive sensual pleasure from the scent of a rose. On these primary principles of our nature, education and accident operate to an unlimited extent; they may be cultivated or checked, directed or diverted, gifted by right guidance with the most acute and faultless sense, or subjected by neglect to every phase of error and disease. He who has followed up these natural laws of aversion and desire, rendering them more and more authoritative by constant obedience, so as to derive pleasure always from that which God originally intended should give him pleasure, and who derives the greatest possible sum of pleasure from any given object, is a man of taste.

This, then, is the real meaning of this disputed word. Perfect taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material

§ 1. Definition of the term "beautiful."

§ 2. Definition of the term "taste."

sources which are attractive to our moral nature in its purity and perfection. He who receives little pleasure from these sources, wants taste; he who receives pleasure from any other sources, has false or bad taste.

And it is thus that the term “taste” is to be distinguished from that of “judgment,” with which it is constantly confounded. Judgment is a general term, expressing definite action of the intellect, and applicable to every kind of subject which can be submitted to it. There may be judgment of congruity, judgment of truth, judgment of justice, and judgment of difficulty and excellence. But all these exertions of the intellect are totally distinct from taste, properly so called, which is the instinctive and instant preferring of one material object to another without any obvious reason, except that it is proper to human nature in its perfection so to do.

Observe, however, I do not mean by excluding direct exertion of the intellect from ideas of beauty, to assert that beauty has no effect upon nor connection with the intellect. All our moral feelings are so interwoven with our intellectual powers, that we cannot affect the one without in some degree addressing the other; and in all high ideas of beauty, it is more than probable that much of the pleasure depends on delicate and untraceable perceptions of fitness, propriety, and relation, which are purely intellectual, and through which we arrive at our noblest ideas of what is commonly and rightly called “intellectual beauty.” But there is yet no immediate exertion of the intellect; that is to say, if a person receiving even the noblest ideas of simple beauty be asked *why* he likes the object exciting them, he will not be able to give any distinct reason, nor to trace in his mind any formed thought, to which he can appeal as a source of pleasure. He will say that the thing gratifies, fills, hallows, exalts his mind, but he will not be able to say why, or how. If he can, and if he can show that he perceives in the object any expression of distinct thought, he has received more than an idea of beauty—it is an idea of relation.

Ideas of beauty are among the noblest which can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and purifying it ac-

according to their degree; and it would appear that we are intended by the Deity to be constantly under their influence, be-

cause there is not one single object in nature which
 § 5. The high rank and function of ideas of beauty. is not capable of conveying them, and which, to

the rightly perceiving mind, does not present an incalculably greater number of beautiful than of deformed parts; there being in fact scarcely anything, in pure, undiseased nature, like positive deformity, but only degrees of beauty, or such slight and rare points of permitted contrast as may render all around them more valuable by their opposition, spots of blackness in creation, to make its colors felt.

But although everything in nature is more or
 § 6. Meaning of the term "ideal beauty." less beautiful, every species of object has its own

kind and degree of beauty; some being in their own nature more beautiful than others, and few, if any, individuals possessing the utmost degree of beauty of which the species is capable. This utmost degree of specific beauty, necessarily coexistent with the utmost perfection of the object in other respects, is the ideal of the object.

Ideas of beauty, then, be it remembered, are the subjects of moral, but not of intellectual perception. By the investigation of them we shall be led to the knowledge of the ideal subjects of art.

CHAPTER VII.

OF IDEAS OF RELATION.

I USE this term rather as one of convenience than as adequately expressive of the vast class of ideas which I wish to be comprehended under it, namely, all those conveyable by art, which are the subjects of distinct intellectual perception and action, and which are therefore worthy of the name of thoughts. But as every thought, or definite exertion of intellect, implies two subjects, and some connection or relation inferred between them, the term "ideas of relation" is not incorrect, though it is inexpressive.

§ 1. General meaning of the term.

Under this head must be arranged everything productive of expression, sentiment, and character, whether in figures or landscapes, (for there may be as much definite expression and marked carrying out of particular thoughts in the treatment of inanimate as of animate nature,) everything relating to the conception of the subject and to the congruity and relation of its parts; not as they enhance each other's beauty by known and constant laws of composition, but as they give each other expression and meaning, by particular application, requiring distinct thought to discover or to enjoy: the choice, for instance, of a particular lurid or appalling light, to illustrate an incident in itself terrible, or of a particular tone of pure color to prepare the mind for the expression of refined and delicate feeling: and, in a still higher sense, the invention of such incidents and thoughts as can be expressed in words as well as on canvas, and are totally independent of any means of art but such as may serve for the bare suggestion of them. The principal object in the foreground of Turner's "Building of Carthage" is a group of children sailing toy boats. The exquisite choice of this incident, as expressive of the ruling passion, which was to be the source of future great

§ 2. What ideas are to be comprehended under it.

ness, in preference to the tumult of busy stone-masons or arming soldiers, is quite as appreciable when it is told as when it is seen,—it has nothing to do with the technicalities of painting ; a scratch of the pen would have conveyed the idea and spoken to the intellect as much as the elaborate realizations of color. Such a thought as this is something far above all art ; it is epic poetry of the highest order. Claude, in subjects of the same kind, commonly introduces people carrying red trunks with iron locks about, and dwells, with infantine delight, on the lustre of the leather and the ornaments of the iron. The intellect can have no occupation here ; we must look to the imitation or to nothing. Consequently, Turner rises above Claude in the very first instant of the conception of his picture, and acquires an intellectual superiority which no powers of the draughtsman or the artist (supposing that such existed in his antagonist) could ever wrest from him.

Such are the function and force of ideas of relation. They are what I have asserted in the second chapter of this section to be the noblest subjects of art. Dependent upon it only for expression, they cause all the rest of its complicated sources of pleasure to take, in comparison with them, the place of mere language or decoration ; nay, even the noblest ideas of beauty sink at once beside these into subordination and subjection. It would add little to the influence of Landseer's picture above instanced, Chap. II., § 4, that the form of the dog should be conceived with every perfection of curve and color which its nature was capable of, and that the ideal lines should be carried out with the science of a Praxiteles ; nay, the instant that the beauty so obtained interfered with the impression of agony and desolation, and drew the mind away from the feeling of the animal to its outward form, that instant would the picture become monstrous and degraded. The utmost glory of the human body is a mean subject of contemplation, compared to the emotion, exertion and character of that which animates it ; the lustre of the limbs of the Aphrodite is faint beside that of the brow of the Madonna ; and the divine form of the Greek god, except as it is the incarnation and expression of divine mind, is degraded beside the passion and the prophecy of the vaults of the Sistine.

§ 3. The exceeding nobility of these ideas.

Ideas of relation are of course, with respect to art generally, the most extensive as the most important source of pleasure ;

§ 4. Why no subdivision of so extensive a class is necessary.

and if we proposed entering upon the criticism of historical works, it would be absurd to attempt to do so without further subdivision and arrangement. But the old landscape painters got over so much canvas without either exercise of, or appeal to, the intellect, that we shall be little troubled with the subject as far as they are concerned ; and whatever subdivision we may adopt, as it will therefore have particular reference to the works of modern artists, will be better understood when we have obtained some knowledge of them in less important points.

By the term “ ideas of relation,” then, I mean in future to express all those sources of pleasure, which involve and require, at the instant of their perception, active exertion of the intellectual powers.

SECTION II.

OF POWER.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF POWER.

WE have seen in the last section, what classes of ideas may be conveyed by art, and we have been able so far to appreciate their relative worth as to see, that from the list, as it is to be applied to the purposes of legitimate criticism, we may at once throw out the ideas of imitation ; first, because, as we have shown, they are unworthy the pursuit of the artist ; and secondly, because they are nothing more than the result of a particular association of ideas of truth. In examining the truth of art, therefore, we shall be compelled to take notice of those particular truths, whose association gives rise to the ideas of imitation. We shall then see more clearly the meanness of those truths, and we shall find ourselves able to use them as tests of vice in art, saying of a picture,—“ It deceives, therefore it must be bad.”

§ 1. No necessity for detailed study of ideas of imitation.

Ideas of power, in the same way, cannot be completely viewed as a separate class ; not because they are mean or unimportant, but because they are almost always associated with, or dependent upon, some of the higher ideas of truth, beauty, or relation, rendered with decision or velocity. That power which delights us in the chalk sketch of a great painter is not one of the fingers, not like that of the writing-master, mere dexterity of hand. It is the accuracy and certainty of the knowledge, rendered evident by its rapid and fearless expression, which is the real source of pleasure ; and so upon each difficulty of art, whether it be to know,

§ 2. Nor for separate study of ideas of power.

or to relate, or to invent, the sensation of power is attendant, when we see that difficulty totally and swiftly vanquished. Hence, as we determine what is otherwise desirable in art, we shall gradually develop the sources of the ideas of power; and if there be anything difficult which is not otherwise desirable, it must be afterwards considered separately.

§ 3. Except under one particular form.

But it will be necessary at present to notice a particular form of the ideas of power, which is partially independent of knowledge of truth, or difficulty, and which is apt to corrupt the judgment of the critic, and debase the work of the artist. It is evident that the conception of power which we receive from a calculation of unseen difficulty, and an estimate of unseen strength, can never be so impressive as that which we receive from the present sensation or sight of the one resisting, and the other overwhelming. In the one case the power is imagined, and in the other felt.

§ 4. There are two modes of receiving ideas of power, commonly inconsistent.

There are thus two modes in which we receive the conception of power; one, the most just, when by a perfect knowledge of the difficulty to be overcome, and the means employed, we form a right estimate of the faculties exerted; the other, when without possessing such intimate and accurate knowledge, we are impressed by a sensation of power in visible action. If these two modes of receiving the impression agree in the result, and if the sensation be equal to the estimate, we receive the utmost possible idea of power. But this is the case perhaps with the works of only one man out of the whole circle of the fathers of art, of him to whom we have just referred, Michael Angelo. In others, the estimate and the sensation are constantly unequal, and often contradictory.

§ 5. First reason of the inconsistency.

The first reason of this inconsistency is, that in order to receive a *sensation* of power, we must see it in operation. Its victory, therefore, must not be achieved, but achieving, and therefore imperfect. Thus we receive a greater sensation of power from the half-hewn limbs of the Twilight to the Day of the Cappella de' Medici, than even from the divine inebriety of the Bacchus in the gallery—greater from the life dashed out along the Friezes of the Parthenon, than from the polished limbs of the Apollo,—greater

from the ink sketch of the head of Raffaele's St. Catherine, than from the perfection of its realization.

Another reason of the inconsistency is, that the sensation of power is in proportion to the apparent inadequacy of the means to the end ; so that the impression is much greater from a partial success attained with slight effort, than from perfect success attained with greater porportional effort. Now, in all art, every touch or effort does individually less in proportion as the work approaches perfection. The first five chalk touches bring a head into existence out of nothing. No five touches in the whole course of the work will ever do so much as these, and the difference made by each touch is more and more imperceptible as the work approaches completion. Consequently, the ratio between the means employed and the effect produced is constantly decreasing, and therefore the least sensation of power is received from the most perfect work.

§ 6. Second reason for the inconsistency.

It is thus evident that there are sensations of power about imperfect art, so that it be right art as far as it goes, which must always be wanting in its perfection ; and that there are sources of pleasure in the hasty sketch and rough hewn block, which are partially wanting in the tinted canvas and the polished marble. But it is nevertheless wrong to prefer the sensation of power to the intellectual perception of it. There is in reality greater power in the completion than in the commencement ; and though it be not so manifest to the senses, it ought to have higher influence on the mind ; and therefore in praising pictures for the ideas of power they convey, we must not look to the keenest sensation, but to the highest estimate, accompanied with as much of the sensation as is compatible with it ; and thus we shall consider those pictures as conveying the highest ideas of power which attain the most *perfect* end with the slightest possible means ; not, observe, those in which, though much has been done with little, all has not been done, but from the picture, in which *all* has been done, and yet not a touch thrown away. The quantity of work in the sketch is necessarily less in proportion to the effect obtained than in the picture ; but

§ 7. The sensation of power ought not to be sought in imperfect art.

yet the picture involves the greater power, if out of all the additional labor bestowed on it, not a touch has been lost.

§ 8. Instances in pictures of modern artists.

For instance, there are few drawings of the present day that involve greater sensations of power than those of Frederick Tayler. Every dash tells, and the quantity of effect obtained is enormous, in proportion to the apparent means. But the effect obtained is not complete. Brilliant, beautiful, and right, as a sketch, the work is still far from perfection, as a drawing. On the contrary, there are few drawings of the present day that bear evidence of more labor bestowed, or more complicated means employed, than those of John Lewis. The result does not, at first, so much convey an impression of inherent power as of prolonged exertion; but the result is complete. Water-color drawing can be carried no farther; nothing has been left unfinished or untold. And on examination of the means employed, it is found and felt that not one touch out of the thousands employed has been thrown away;—that not one dot nor dash could be spared without loss of effect;—and that the exertion has been as swift as it has been prolonged—as bold as it has been persevering. The power involved in such a picture is of the highest order, and the enduring pleasure following on the estimate of it pure.

§ 9. Connection between ideas of power and modes of execution.

But there is still farther ground for caution in pursuing the sensation of power, connected with the particular characters and modes of execution. This we shall be better able to understand by briefly reviewing the various excellences which may belong to execution, and give pleasure in it; though the full determination of what is desirable in it, and the critical examination of the execution of different artists, must be deferred, as will be immediately seen. until we are more fully acquainted with the principles of truth.

CHAPTER II.

OF IDEAS OF POWER, AS THEY ARE DEPENDENT UPON EXECUTION.

By the term "execution," I understand the right mechanical use of the means of art to produce a given end.

§ 1. Meaning of the term "execution."

All qualities of execution, properly so called, are influenced by, and in a great degree dependent on, a far higher power than that of mere execution,—knowledge of truth. For exactly in proportion as an artist is certain of his end, will he be swift and simple in his means ; and, as he is accurate and deep in his knowledge, will he be refined and precise in his touch. The first merit of manipulation, then, is that delicate and ceaseless expression of refined truth which is carried out to the last touch, and shadow of a touch, and which makes every hairsbreadth of importance, and every gradation full of meaning. It is not, properly speaking, execution ; but it is the only source of difference between the execution of a commonplace and of a perfect artist. The lowest draughtsman, if he have spent the same time in handling the brush, may be equal to the highest in the other qualities of execution (in swiftness, simplicity, and decision ;) but not in truth. It is in the perfection and precision of the instantaneous line that the claim to immortality is laid. And if this truth of truths be present, all the other qualities of execution may well be spared ; and to those artists who wish to excuse their ignorance and inaccuracy by a species of execution which is a perpetual proclamation, "*qu'ils n'ont demeuré qu'un quart d'heure à le faire,*" we may reply with the truthful Alceste, "*Monsieur, le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire.*"

§ 3. The second, simplicity.

The second quality of execution is simplicity. The more unpretending, quiet, and retiring the means, the more impressive their effect. Any ostentation, bril-

liancy, or pretension of touch,—any exhibition of power or quickness, merely as such, above all, any attempt to render lines attractive at the expense of their meaning, is vice.

§ 4. The third mystery.

The third is mystery. Nature is always mysterious and secret in the use of her means ; and art is always likest her when it is most inexplicable. That execution which is the most incomprehensible, and which therefore defies imitation, (other qualities being supposed alike,) is the best.

§ 5. The fourth, inadequacy ; and the fifth, decision.

The fourth is inadequacy. The less sufficient the means appear to the end, the greater (as has been already noticed) will be the sensation of power.

The fifth is decision : the appearance, that is, that whatever is done, has been done fearlessly and at once ; because this gives us the impression that both the fact to be represented, and the means necessary to its representation, were perfectly known.

§ 6. The sixth, velocity.

The sixth is velocity. Not only is velocity, or the appearance of it, agreeable as decision is, because it gives ideas of power and knowledge ; but of two touches, as nearly as possible the same in other respects, the quickest will invariably be the best. Truth being supposed equally present in the shape and direction of both, there will be more evenness, grace and variety, in the quick one than in the slow one. It will be more agreeable to the eye as a touch or line, and will possess more of the qualities of the lines of nature—gradation, uncertainty, and unity.

§ 7. Strangeness an illegitimate source of pleasure in execution.

These six qualities are the only perfectly legitimate sources of pleasure in execution ; but I might have added a seventh—strangeness, which in many cases is productive of a pleasure not altogether mean or degrading, though scarcely right. Supposing the other higher qualities first secured, it adds in no small degree to our impression of the artist's knowledge, if the means used be such as we should never have thought of, or should have thought adapted to a contrary effect. Let us, for instance, compare the execution of the bull's head in the left hand lowest corner of the Adoration of the Magi, in the Museum at Antwerp, with that in Berghem's landscape, No. 132 in the Dulwich Gallery. Rubens first scratches horizontally over his canvas a thin grayish brown,

transparent and even, very much the color of light wainscot ; the horizontal strokes of the bristles being left so evident, that the whole might be taken for an imitation of wood, were it not for its transparency. On this ground the eye, nostril, and outline of the cheek are given with two or three rude, brown touches, (about three or four minutes' work in all,) though the head is colossal. The background is then laid in with thick, solid, warm white, actually projecting all round the head, leaving it in dark intaglio. Finally, five thin and scratchy strokes of very cold bluish white are struck for the high light on the forehead and nose, and the head is complete. Seen within a yard of the canvas, it looks actually transparent—a flimsy, meaningless, distant shadow ; while the background looks solid, projecting and near. From the right distance, (ten or twelve yards off, whence alone the whole of the picture can be seen,) it is a complete, rich, substantial, and living realization of the projecting head of the animal ; while the background falls far behind. Now there is no slight nor mean pleasure in perceiving such a result attained by means so strange. By Berghem, on the other hand, a dark background is first laid in with exquisite delicacy and transparency, and on this the cow's head is actually modelled in luminous white, the separate locks of hair projecting from the canvas. No surprise, nor much pleasure of any kind, would be attendant on this execution, even were the result equally successful ; and what little pleasure we had in it, vanishes, when on retiring from the picture, we find the head shining like a distant lantern, instead of substantial or near. Yet strangeness is not to be considered as a legitimate source of pleasure. That means which is most conducive to the end, should always be the most pleasurable ; and that which is most conducive to the end, can be strange only to the ignorance of the spectator. This kind of pleasure is illegitimate, therefore, because it implies and requires, in those who feel it, ignorance of art.

§ 8. Yet even the legitimate sources of pleasure in execution are inconsistent with each other.

The legitimate sources of pleasure in execution are therefore truth, simplicity, mystery, inadequacy, decision, and velocity. But of these, be it observed, some are so far inconsistent with others, that they cannot be united in high degrees. Mystery with inade-

quacy, for instance ; since to see that the means are inadequate, we must see what they are. Now the first three are the great qualities of execution, and the last three are the attractive ones, because on them are chiefly attendant the ideas of power. By the first three the attention is withdrawn from the means and fixed on the result : by the last three, withdrawn from the result and fixed on the means. To see that execution is swift or that it is decided, we must look away from its creation to observe it in the act of creating ; we must think more of the pallet than of the picture, but simplicity and mystery compel the mind to leave the means and fix itself on the conception. Hence the

danger of too great fondness for those sensations of power which are associated with the three last qualities of execution ; for although it is most desirable that these should be present as far as they are consistent with the others, and though their visible absence is always painful and wrong, yet the moment the higher qualities are sacrificed to them in the least degree, we have a brilliant vice. Berghem and Salvator Rosa are good instances of vicious execution dependent on too great fondness for sensations of power, vicious because intrusive and attractive in itself, instead of being subordinate to its results and forgotten in them. There is perhaps no greater stumbling-block in the artist's way, than the tendency to sacrifice truth and simplicity to decision and velocity,* captivating qualities, easy of attainment, and sure to attract attention and praise, while the delicate degree of truth which is at first sacrificed to them is so totally unappreciable by

§ 9. And fondness for ideas of power leads to the adoption of the lowest.

* I have here noticed only noble vices, the sacrifices of one excellence to another legitimate but inferior one. There are, on the other hand, qualities of execution which are often sought for and praised, though scarcely by the class of persons for whom I am writing, in which everything is sacrificed to illegitimate and contemptible sources of pleasure, and these are vice throughout, and have no redeeming quality nor excusing aim. Such is that which is often thought so desirable in the Drawing-master, under the title of boldness, meaning that no touch is ever to be made less than the tenth of an inch broad ; such, on the other hand, the softness and smoothness which are the great attraction of Carlo Dolci, and such the exhibition of particular powers and tricks of the hand and fingers, in total forgetfulness of any end whatsoever to be attained thereby, which is especially characteristic of modern engraving. Compare Sect. II. Chap. II. § 21. Note.

the majority of spectators, so difficult of attainment to the artist, that it is no wonder that efforts so arduous and unrewarded should be abandoned. But if the temptation be
 § 10. Therefore perilous. once yielded to, its consequences are fatal ; there is no pause in the fall. I could name a celebrated modern artist—once a man of the highest power and promise, who is a glaring instance of the peril of such a course. Misled by the undue popularity of his swift execution, he has sacrificed to it, first precision, and then truth, and her associate, beauty. What was first neglect of nature, has become contradiction of her ; what was once imperfection, is now falsehood ; and all that was meritorious in his manner, is becoming the worst, because the most attractive of vices ; decision without a foundation, and swiftness without an end.

§ 11. Recapitulation. Such are the principal modes in which the ideas of power may become a dangerous attraction to the artist—a false test to the critic. But in all cases where they lead us astray it will be found that the error is caused by our preferring victory over a small *apparent* difficulty to victory over a great, but concealed one ; and so that we keep this distinction constantly in view, (whether with reference to execution or to any other quality of art,) between the sensation and the intellectual estimate of power, we shall always find the ideas of power a just and high source of pleasure in every kind and grade of art.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE SUBLIME.

It may perhaps be wondered that in the division we have made of our subject, we have taken no notice of the sublime in art, and that in our explanation of that division we have not once used the word.

§ 1. Sublimity is the effect upon the mind of anything above it. The fact is, that sublimity is not a specific term,—not a term descriptive of the effect of a particular class of ideas. Anything which elevates the mind is sublime, and elevation of mind is produced by the contemplation of greatness of any kind ; but chiefly, of course, by the greatness of the noblest things. Sublimity is, therefore, only another word for the effect of greatness upon the feelings. Greatness of matter, space, power, virtue, or beauty, are thus all sublime ; and there is perhaps no desirable quality of a work of art, which in its perfection is not, in some way or degree, sublime.

§ 2. Burke's theory of the nature of the sublime incorrect, and why. I am fully prepared to allow of much ingenuity in Burke's theory of the sublime, as connected with self-preservation. There are few things so great as death ; and there is perhaps nothing which banishes all littleness of thought and feeling in an equal degree with its contemplation. Everything, therefore, which in any way points to it, and, therefore, most dangers and powers over which we have little control, are in some degree sublime. But it is not the fear, observe, but the contemplation of death ; not the instinctive shudder and struggle of self-preservation, but the deliberate measurement of the doom, which are really great or sublime in feeling. It is not while we shrink, but while we defy, that we receive or convey the highest conceptions of the fate. There is no sublimity in the agony of terror. Whether do we trace it most in the cry to the mountains, "fall on us," and to the hills, "cover us," or in the calmness of the proph

ecy—"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God?" A little reflection

§ 3. Danger is sublime, but not the fear of it.

tion will easily convince any one, that so far from the feelings of self-preservation being necessary to the sublime, their greatest action is totally destructive of it; and that there are few feelings less capable of its perception than those of a coward. But the simple conception or idea of greatness of suffering or extent of destruction is sublime, whether there be any connection of that idea with ourselves or not. If we were placed beyond the reach of all peril or pain, the perception of these agencies in their influence on others would not be less sublime, not because peril or pain are sublime in their own nature, but because their contemplation, exciting

§ 4. The highest beauty is sublime.

compassion or fortitude, elevates the mind, and renders meanness of thought impossible. Beauty is not so often felt to be sublime; because, in many kinds of purely material beauty there is some truth in Burke's assertion, that "littleness" is one of its elements. But he who has not felt that there may be beauty without littleness, and that such beauty is a source of the sublime, is yet ignorant of the meaning of the ideal in art. I do not mean,

§ 5. And generally whatever elevates the mind.

in tracing the source of the sublime to greatness, to hamper myself with any fine-spun theory. I take the widest possible ground of investigation, that sublimity is found wherever anything elevates the mind; that is, wherever it contemplates anything above itself, and perceives it to be so. This is the simple philological signification of the word derived from *sublimis*; and will serve us much more easily, and be a far clearer and more evident ground of argument, than any mere metaphysical or more limited definition, while the proof of its justness will be naturally developed by its application to the different branches of art.

§ 6. The former division of the subject is therefore sufficient.

As, therefore, the sublime is not distinct from what is beautiful, nor from other sources of pleasure in art, but is only a particular mode and manifestation of them, my subject will divide itself into the investigation of ideas of truth, beauty, and relation; and to each of these classes of ideas I destine a separate part of the work. The investigation of ideas of truth will enable us to deter-

mine the relative rank of artists as followers and historians of nature.

That of ideas of beauty will lead us to compare them in their attainment, first of what is agreeable in technical matters, then in color and composition, finally and chiefly, in the purity of their conceptions of the ideal.

And that of ideas of relation will lead us to compare them as originators of just thought.

PART II. OF TRUTH.

SECTION I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

OF IDEAS OF TRUTH IN THEIR CONNECTION WITH THOSE OF BEAUTY AND RELATION.

It cannot but be evident from the above division of the ideas conveyable by art, that the landscape painter must always have two great and distinct ends; the first, to induce in the spectator's mind the faithful conception of any natural objects whatsoever; the second, to guide the spectator's mind to those objects most worthy of its contemplation, and to inform him of the thoughts and feelings with which these were regarded by the artist himself.

§ 1. The two great ends of landscape painting are the representation of facts and thoughts.

In attaining the first end, the painter only places the spectator where he stands himself; he sets him before the landscape and leaves him. The spectator is alone. He may follow out his own thoughts as he would in the natural solitude, or he may remain untouched, unreflecting and regardless, as his disposition may incline him. But he has nothing of thought given to him, no new ideas, no unknown feelings, forced on his attention or his heart. The artist is his conveyance, not his companion,—his horse, not his friend. But in attaining the sec-

ond end, the artist not only *places* the spectator, but *talks* to him ; makes him a sharer in his own strong feelings and quick thoughts ; hurries him away in his own enthusiasm ; guides him to all that is beautiful ; snatches him from all that is base, and leaves him more than delighted,—ennobled and instructed, under the sense of having not only beheld a new scene, but of having held communion with a new mind, and having been endowed for a time with the keen perception and the impetuous emotion of a nobler and more penetrating intelligence.

Each of these different aims of art will necessarily induce a different choice of objects to be represented. The first does not indeed imply choice at all, but it is usually united with the selection of such objects as may be naturally and constantly pleasing to all men, at all times ; and this selection, when perfect and careful, leads to the attainment of the pure ideal. But the artist aiming at the second end, selects his objects for their meaning and character, rather than for their beauty ; and uses them rather to throw light upon the particular thought he wishes to convey, than as in themselves objects of unconnected admiration.

Now, although the first mode of selection, when guided by deep reflection, may rise to the production of works possessing a noble and ceaseless influence on the human mind, it is likely to degenerate into, or rather, in nine cases out of ten, it never goes beyond, a mere appeal to such parts of our animal nature as are constant and common—shared by all, and perpetual in all ; such, for instance, as the pleasure of the eye in the opposition of a cold and warm color, or of a massy form with a delicate one. It also tends to induce constant repetition of the same ideas, and reference to the same principles ; it gives rise to those *rules* of art which properly excited Reynolds's indignation when applied to its higher efforts ; it is the source of, and the apology for, that host of technicalities and absurdities which in all ages have been the curse of art and the crown of the connoisseur.

But art, in its second and highest aim, is not an appeal to constant animal feelings, but an expression and awakening of individual thought : it

§ 2. They induce a different choice of material subjects.

§ 3. The first mode of selection apt to produce sameness and repetition.

§ 4. The second necessitating variety.

is therefore as various and as extended in its efforts as the compass and grasp of the directing mind ; and we feel, in each of its results, that we are looking, not at a specimen of a tradesman's wares, of which he is ready to make us a dozen to match, but at one coruscation of a perpetually active mind, like which there has not been, and will not be another.

§ 5. Yet the first
is delightful to
all.

Hence, although there can be no doubt which of these branches of art is the highest, it is equally evident that the first will be the most generally felt and appreciated. For the simple statement of the truths of nature must in itself be pleasing to every order of mind ; because every truth of nature is more or less beautiful ; and if there be just and right selection of the more important of these truths—based, as above explained, on feelings and desires common to all mankind—the facts so selected must, in some degree, be delightful to all, and their value appreciable by all : more or less, indeed, as their senses and instinct have been rendered more or less acute and accurate by use and study ; but in some degree

§ 6. The second
only to a few.

by all, and in the same way by all. But the highest art, being based on sensations of peculiar minds, sensations occurring to *them* only at particular times, and to a plurality of mankind perhaps never, and being expressive of thoughts which could only rise out of a mass of the most extended knowledge, and of dispositions modified in a thousand ways by peculiarity of intellect—can only be met and understood by persons having some sort of sympathy with the high and solitary minds which produced it—sympathy only to be felt by minds in some degree high and solitary themselves. He alone can appreciate the art, who could comprehend the conversation of the painter, and share in his emotion, in moments of his most fiery passion and most original thought. And whereas the true meaning and end of his art must thus be sealed to thousands, or misunderstood by them ; so also, as he is sometimes obliged, in working out his own peculiar end, to set at defiance those constant laws which have arisen out of our lower and changeless desires, that whose purpose is unseen, is frequently in its means and parts displeasing.

But this want of extended influence in high art, be it especially observed, proceeds from no want of truth in the art itself,

but from a want of sympathy in the spectator with those feelings in the artist which prompt him to the utterance of one truth rather than of another. For (and this is what I

§ 7. The first
necessary to the
second.

wish at present especially to insist upon) although it is possible to reach what I have stated to be the first end of art, the representation of facts, without reaching the second, the representation of thoughts, yet it is altogether impossible to reach the second without having previously reached the first. I do not say that a man cannot think, having false basis and material for thought; but that a false thought is worse than the want of thought, and therefore is not art. And this is the reason why, though I consider the second as the real and only important end of all art, I call the representation of facts the first end; because it is necessary to the other, and must be attained before it. It is the foundation of all art; like real foundations it may be little thought of when a brilliant fabric is raised on it; but it must be there: and as few buildings are beautiful unless every line and column of their mass have reference to their foundation, and are suggestive of its existence and strength, so nothing can be beautiful in art which does not in all its parts suggest and guide to the foundation, even where no undecorated portion of it is visible; while the noblest edifices of art are built of such pure and fine crystal that the foundation may all be seen through them; and then many, while they do not see what is built upon that first story, yet much admire the solidity of its brickwork; thinking they understand all that is to be understood of the matter; while others stand beside them, looking not at the low story, but up into the heaven at that building of crystal in which the builder's spirit is dwelling. And thus, though we want the thoughts and feelings of the artist as well as the truth, yet they must be thoughts arising out of the knowledge of truth, and feelings raising out of the contemplation of truth. We do not want his mind to be as badly blown glass, that distorts what we see through it; but like a glass of sweet and strange color, that gives new tones to what we see through it; and a glass of rare strength and clearness too, to let us see more than we could ourselves, and bring nature up to us and near to us. Nothing can atone for the want of truth, not the most brilliant imagination, the most playful

fancy, the most pure feeling, (supposing that feeling *could* be pure and false at the same time;) not the most exalted conception, nor the most comprehensive grasp of intellect, can make amends for the want of truth, and that for two reasons; first, because falsehood is in itself revolting and degrading; and secondly, because nature is so immeasurably superior to all that the human mind can conceive, that every departure from her is a fall beneath her, so that there can be no such thing as an ornamental falsehood. All falsehood must be a blot as well as a sin, an injury as well as a deception.

§ 8. The exceeding importance of truth.

We shall, in consequence, find that no artist can be graceful, imaginative, or original, unless he be truthful; and that the pursuit of beauty, instead of leading us away from truth, increases the desire for it and the necessity of it tenfold; so that those artists who are really great in imaginative power, will be found to have based their boldness of conception on a mass of knowledge far exceeding that possessed by those who pride themselves on its accumulation without regarding its use. Coldness and want of passion in a picture, are not signs of the accuracy, but of the paucity of its statements; true vigor and brilliancy are not signs of audacity, but of knowledge.

§ 10. How truth may be considered a just criterion of all art.

Hence it follows that it is in the power of all, with care and time, to form something like a just judgment of the relative merits of artists; for although with respect to the feeling and passion of pictures, it is often as impossible to criticise as to appreciate, except to such as are in some degree equal in powers of mind, and in some respects the same in modes of mind, with those whose works they judge; yet, with respect to the representation of facts, it is possible for all, by attention, to form a right judgment of the respective powers and attainments of every artist. Truth is a bar of comparison at which they may all be examined, and according to the rank they take in this examination, will almost invariably be that which, if capable of appreciating them in every respect, we should be just in assigning them; so strict is the connection, so constant the relation between the sum of knowl-

edge and the extent of thought, between accuracy of perception and vividness of idea.

I shall endeavor, therefore, in the present portion of the work, to enter with care and impartiality into the investigation of the claims of the schools of ancient and modern landscape to faithfulness in representing nature. I shall pay no regard whatsoever to what may be thought beautiful, or sublime, or imaginative. I shall look only for truth ; bare, clear, downright statement of facts ; showing in each particular, as far as I am able, what the truth of nature is, and then seeking for the plain expression of it, and for that alone. And I shall thus endeavor, totally regardless of fervor of imagination or brilliancy of effect, or any other of their more captivating qualities, to examine and to judge the works of the great living painter, who is, I believe, imagined by the majority of the public to paint more falsehood and less fact than any other known master. We shall see **with** what reason.

CHAPTER II.

THAT THE TRUTH OF NATURE IS NOT TO BE DISCERNED BY
THE UNEDUCATED SENSES.

It may be here inquired by the reader, with much appearance of reason, why I think it necessary to devote a separate portion of the work to the showing of what is truthful in art. “Can-
not we,” say the public, “see what nature is with
our own eyes, and find out for ourselves what is
like her?” It will be as well to determine this
question before we go farther, because if this were
possible, there would be little need of criticism or teaching with
respect to art.

§ 1. The common
self-deception of
men with respect
to their power of
discerning truth.

Now I have just said that it is possible for all men, by care and attention, to form a just judgment of the fidelity of artists to nature. To do this, no peculiar powers of mind are required, no sympathy with particular feelings, nothing which every man of ordinary intellect does not in some degree possess,—powers, namely, of observation and intelligence, which by cultivation may be brought to a high degree of perfection and acuteness. But until this cultivation has been bestowed, and until the instrument thereby perfected has been employed in a consistent series of careful observation, it is as absurd as it is audacious to pretend to form any judgment whatsoever respecting the truth of art : and my first business, before going a step farther, must be to combat the nearly universal error of belief among the thoughtless and unreflecting, that they know either what nature is, or what is like her, that they can discover truth by instinct, and that their minds are such pure Venice glass as to be shocked by all treachery. I have to prove to them that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy, and that the truth of nature is a part of the truth of God ; to him who does not search it out, darkness, as it is to him who does, infinity.

The first great mistake that people make in the matter, is the supposition that they must *see* a thing if it be before their eyes. They forget the great truth told them by Locke, Book ii. chap. 9, § 3 :—"This is certain, that whatever alterations are made in the body, if they reach not the mind, whatever impressions are made on the outward parts, if they are not taken notice of within, there is no perception. Fire may burn our bodies, with no other effect than it does a billet, unless the motion be continued to the brain, and there the sense of heat or idea of pain be produced in the mind, wherein consists actual perception. How often may a man observe in himself, that while his mind is intently employed in the contemplation of some subjects and curiously surveying some ideas that are there, it takes no notice of impressions of sounding bodies, made upon the organ of hearing, with the same attention that uses to be for the producing the ideas of sound ! A sufficient impulse there may be on the organ, but it not reaching the observation of the mind, there follows no perception, and though the motion that uses to produce the idea of sound be made in the ear, yet no sound is heard." And what is here said, which all must feel by their own experience to be true, is more remarkably and necessarily the case with sight than with any other of the senses, for this reason, that the ear is not accustomed to exercise constantly its functions of hearing ; it is accustomed to stillness, and the occurrence of a sound of any kind whatsoever is apt to awake attention, and be followed with perception, in proportion to the degree of sound ; but the eye, during our waking hours, exercises constantly its function of seeing ; it is its constant habit ; we always, as far as the *bodily* organ is concerned, see something, and we always see in the same degree, so that the occurrence of sight, as such, to the eye, is only the continuance of its necessary state of action, and awakes no attention whatsoever, except by the particular nature and quality of the sight. And thus, unless the minds of men are particularly directed to the impressions of sight, objects pass perpetually before the eyes without conveying any impression to the brain at all ; and so pass actually unseen, not merely unnoticed, but in the full, clear sense of the word, unseen. And numbers of men being pre-occupied with business or care

§ 2. Men usually see little of what is before their eyes.

of some description, totally unconnected with the impressions of sight, such is actually the case with them, they receiving from nature only the inevitable sensations of blueness, redness, darkness, light, etc., and except at particular and rare moments, no more whatsoever.

§ 3. But more or less in proportion to their natural sensibility to what is beautiful.

The degree of ignorance of external nature in which men may thus remain, depends, therefore, partly on the number and character of the subjects with which their minds may be otherwise occupied, and partly on a natural want of sensibility to the power of beauty of form, and the other attributes of external objects. I do not think that there is ever such absolute incapacity in the eye for distinguishing and receiving pleasure from certain forms and colors, as there is in persons who are technically said to have no ear, for distinguishing notes, but there is naturally every degree of bluntness and acuteness, both for perceiving the truth of form, and for receiving pleasure from it when perceived. And although I believe even the lowest degree of these faculties can be expanded almost unlimitedly by cultivation, the pleasure received rewards not the labor necessary, and the pursuit is abandoned. So that while in those whose sensations are naturally acute and vivid, the call of external nature is so strong that it must be obeyed, and is ever heard louder as the approach to her is nearer,—in those whose sensations are naturally blunt, the call is overpowered at once by other thoughts, and their

§ 4. Connected with a perfect state of moral feeling.

faculties of perception, weak originally, die of disuse. With this kind of bodily sensibility to color and form is intimately connected that higher sensibility which we revere as one of the chief attributes of all noble minds, and as the chief spring of real poetry. I believe this kind of sensibility may be entirely resolved into the acuteness of bodily sense of which I have been speaking, associated with love, love I mean in its infinite and holy functions, as it embraces divine and human and brutal intelligences, and hallows the physical perception of external objects by association, gratitude, veneration, and other pure feelings of our moral nature. And although the discovery of truth is in itself altogether intellectual, and dependent merely on our powers of physical perception and abstract intellect, wholly independent of our moral nature,

yet these instruments (perception and judgment) are so sharpened and brightened, and so far more swiftly and effectively used, when they have the energy and passion of our moral nature to bring them into action—perception is so quickened by love, and judgment so tempered by veneration, that, practically, a man of deadened moral sensation is always dull in his perception of truth, and thousands of the highest and most divine truths of nature are wholly concealed from him, however constant and indefatigable may be his intellectual search. Thus, then, the farther we look, the more we are limited in the number of those to whom we should choose to appeal as judges of truth, and the more we perceive how great a number of mankind may be partially incapacitated from either discovering or feeling it.

§ 5. And of the intellectual powers. Next to sensibility, which is necessary for the perception of facts, come reflection and memory, which are necessary for the retention of them, and recognition of their resemblances. For a man may receive impression after impression, and that vividly and with delight, and yet, if he take no care to reason upon those impressions and trace them to their sources, he may remain totally ignorant of the facts that produced them ; nay, may attribute them to facts with which they have no connection, or may coin causes for them that have no existence at all. And the more sensibility and imagination a man possesses, the more likely will he be to fall into error ; for then he will see whatever he expects, and admire and judge with his heart, and not with his eyes. How many people are misled, by what has been said and sung of the serenity of Italian skies, to suppose they must be more *blue* than the skies of the north, and think that they see them so ; whereas, the sky of Italy is far more dull and gray in color than the skies of the north, and is distinguished only by its intense repose of light. And this is confirmed by Benvenuto Cellini, who, I remember, on his first entering France, is especially struck with the clearness of the sky, as contrasted with the *mist* of Italy. And what is more strange still, when people see in a painting what they suppose to have been the source of their impressions, they will affirm it to be truthful, though they feel no such impression resulting from it. Thus, though day after

day they may have been impressed by the tone and warmth of an Italian sky, yet not having traced the feeling to its source, and supposing themselves impressed by its *blueness*, they will affirm a blue sky in a painting to be truthful, and reject the most faithful rendering of all the real attributes of Italy as cold or dull. And this influence of the imagination

§ 6. How sight depends upon previous knowledge.

over the senses, is peculiarly observable in the perpetual disposition of mankind to suppose that they *see* what they *know*, and *vice versa* in their not seeing what they do not know. Thus, if a child be asked to draw the corner of a house, he will lay down something in the form of the letter T. He has no conception that the two lines of the roof, which he knows to be level, produce on his eye the impression of a slope. It requires repeated and close attention before he detects this fact, or can be made to feel that the lines on his paper are false. And the Chinese, children in all things, suppose a good perspective drawing to be as false as we feel their plate patterns to be, or wonder at the strange buildings which come to a point at the end. And all the early works, whether of nations or of men, show, by their want of *shade*, how little the eye, without knowledge, is to be depended upon to discover truth. The eye of a Red Indian, keen enough to find the trace of his enemy or his prey, even in the unnatural turn of a trodden leaf, is yet so blunt to the impressions of shade, that Mr. Catlin mentions his once having been in great danger from having painted a portrait with the face in half-light, which the untutored observers imagined and affirmed to be the painting of half a face. Barry, in his sixth lecture, takes notice of the same want of actual *sight* in the early painters of Italy. “The imitations,” he says, “of early art are like those of children—nothing is seen in the spectacle before us, unless it be previously known and sought for; and numberless observable differences between the age of ignorance and that of knowledge, show how much the contraction or extension of our sphere of vision depends upon other considerations than the mere returns of our natural optics.” And the deception which takes place so broadly in cases like these, has infinitely greater influence over our judgment of the more intricate and less tangible truths of nature. We are constantly supposing that we see

what experience only has shown us, or can show us, to have existence, constantly missing the sight of what we do not know beforehand to be visible : and painters, to the last hour of their lives, are apt to fall in some degree into the error of painting what exists, rather than what they can see. I shall prove

the extent of this error more completely hereafter.

§ 7. The difficulty increased by the variety of truths in nature.

Be it also observed, that all these difficulties would lie in the way, even if the truths of nature were always the same, constantly repeated and brought before us. But the truths of nature are one eternal change—one infinite variety. There is no bush on the face of the globe exactly like another bush ;—there are no two trees in the forest whose boughs bend into the same network, nor two leaves on the same tree which could not be told one from the other, nor two waves in the sea exactly alike. And out of this mass of various, yet agreeing beauty, it is by long attention only that the conception of the constant character—the ideal form—hinted at by all, yet assumed by none, is fixed upon the imagination for its standard of truth.

It is not singular, therefore, nor in any way disgraceful, that the majority of spectators are totally incapable of appreciating the truth of nature, when fully set before them ; but it is both singular and disgraceful that it is so difficult to convince them of their own incapability. Ask the connoisseur, who has scamped over all Europe, the shape of the leaf of an elm, and the chances are ninety to one that he cannot tell you ; and yet he will be voluble of criticism on every painted landscape from Dresden to Madrid, and pretend to tell you whether they are like nature or not. Ask an enthusiastic chatterer in the Sistine Chapel how many ribs he has, and you get no answer ; but it is odds that you do not get out of the door without his informing you that he considers such and such a figure badly drawn !

§ 8. We recognize objects by their least important attributes. Compare Part I., Sect. I., Chap. 4.

A few such interrogations as these might indeed convict, if not convince the mass of spectators of incapability, were it not for the universal reply, that they can recognize what they cannot describe, and feel what is truthful, though they do not know what is truth. And this is, to a certain degree, true : a man may recognize the portrait of his friend, though he cannot,

if you ask him apart, tell you the shape of his nose or the height of his forehead ; and every one could tell nature herself from an imitation ; why not then, it will be asked, what is like her from what is not ? For this simple reason, that we constantly recognize things by their least important attributes, and by help of very few of those, and if these attributes exist not in the imitation, though there may be thousands of others far higher and more valuable, yet if those be wanting, or imperfectly rendered, by which we are accustomed to recognize the object, we deny the likeness ; while if these be given, though all the great and valuable and important attributes may be wanting, we affirm the likeness. Recognition is no proof of real and intrinsic resemblance. We recognize our books by their bindings, though the true and essential characteristics lie inside. A man is known to his dog by the smell—to his tailor by the coat—to his friend by the smile : each of these know him, but how little, or how much, depends on the dignity of the intelligence. That which is truly and indeed characteristic of the man, is known only to God. One portrait of a man may possess exact accuracy of feature, and no atom of expression ; it may be, to use the ordinary terms of admiration bestowed on such portraits by those whom they please, “ as like as it can stare.” Everybody, down to his cat, would know this. Another portrait may have neglected or misrepresented the features, but may have given the flash of the eye, and the peculiar radiance of the lip, seen on him only in his hours of highest mental excitement. None but his friends would know this. Another may have given none of his ordinary expressions, but one which he wore in the most excited instant of his life, when all his secret passions and all his highest powers were brought into play at once. None but those who had then seen him might recognize *this* as like. But which would be the most truthful portrait of the *man* ? The first gives the accidents of body—the sport of climate, and food, and time—which corruption inhabits, and the worm waits for. The second gives the stamp of the soul upon the flesh ; but it is the soul seen in the emotions which it shares with many—which may not be characteristic of its essence—the results of habit, and education, and accident—a gloze, whether purposely worn or unconsciously assumed, per-

haps totally contrary to all that is rooted and real in the mind that it conceals. The third has caught the trace of all that was most hidden and most mighty, when all hypocrisy, and all habit, and all petty and passing emotion—the ice, and the bank, and the foam of the immortal river—were shivered, and broken, and swallowed up in the awakening of its inward strength ; when the call and claim of some divine motive had brought into visible being those latent forces and feelings which the spirit's own volition could not summon, nor its consciousness comprehend ; which God only knew, and God only could awaken, the depth and the mystery of its peculiar and separating attributes. And so it is with external Nature : she has a body and a soul like man ; but her soul is the Deity. It is possible to represent the body without the spirit ; and this shall be like to those whose senses are only cognizant of body. It is possible to represent the spirit in its ordinary and inferior manifestations ; and this shall be like to those who have not watched for its moments of power. It is possible to represent the spirit in its secret and high operations ; and this shall be like only to those to whose watching they have been revealed. All these are truth ; but according to the dignity of the truths he can represent or feel, is the power of the painter,—the justice of the judge.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS :—FIRST, THAT PARTICULAR TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN GENERAL ONES.

I HAVE in the last chapter affirmed that we usually recognize objects by their least essential characteristics. This very naturally excites the inquiry what I consider their important characteristics, and why I call one truth more important than another. And this question must be immediately determined, because it is evident, that in judging of the truth of painters, we shall have to consider not only the accuracy with which individual truths are given, but the relative importance of the truths themselves ; for as it constantly happens that the powers of art are unable to render *all* truths, that artist must be considered the most truthful who has preserved the most important at the expense of the most trifling.

§ 1. Necessity of determining the relative importance of truths.

Now if we are to begin our investigation in Aristotle's way, and look at the *φαινόμενα* of the subject, we shall immediately stumble over a maxim which is in everybody's mouth, and which, as it is understood in practice, is true and useful, as it is usually applied in argument, false and misleading. "General truths are more important than particular ones." Often, when in conversation, I have been praising Turner for his perpetual variety, and for giving so particular and separate a character to each of his compositions, that the mind of the painter can only be estimated by seeing all that he has ever done, and that nothing can be prophesied of a picture coming into existence on his easel, but that it will be totally different in idea from all that he has ever done before ; and when I have opposed this inexhaustible knowledge or imagination, whichever it may be, to the

§ 2. Misapplication of the aphorism : "General truths are more important than particular ones."

perpetual repetition of some half-dozen conceptions by Claude and Poussin, I have been met by the formidable objection, enunciated with much dignity and self-satisfaction on the part of my antagonist—"That is not painting general truths, that is painting particular truths." Now there must

§ 3. Falseness of this maxim taken without explanation.

be something wrong in that application of a principle which would make the variety and abundance which we look for as the greatest sign of intellect in the writer, the greatest sign of error in the painter; and we shall accordingly see, by an application of it to other matters, that, taken without limitation, the whole proposition is utterly false. For instance, Mrs. Jameson somewhere mentions the exclamation of a lady of her acquaintance, more desirous to fill a pause in conversation than abundant in sources of observation: "What an excellent book the Bible is!" This was a very general truth indeed, a truth predicable of the Bible in common with many other books, but it certainly is neither striking nor important. Had the lady exclaimed—"How evidently is the Bible a divine revelation!" she would have expressed a particular truth, one predicable of the Bible only; but certainly far more interesting and important. Had she, on the contrary, informed us that the Bible was a book, she would have been still more general, and still less entertaining. If I ask any one who somebody else is, and receive for answer that he is a man, I get little satisfaction for my pains; but if I am told that he is Sir Isaac Newton, I immediately thank my neighbor for his information. The fact is, and the above instances

§ 4. Generality important in the subject, particularity in the predicate.

may serve at once to prove it if it be not self-evident, that generality gives importance to the *subject*, and limitation or particularity to the *predicate*. If I say that such and such a man in China is an opium-eater, I say nothing very interesting, because my subject (such a man) is particular. If I say that all men in China are opium-eaters, I say something interesting, because my subject (all men) is general. If I say that all men in China eat, I say nothing interesting, because my predicate (eat) is general. If I say that all men in China eat opium, I say something interesting, because my predicate (eat opium) is particular.

Now almost everything which (with reference to a given sub-

ject) a painter has to ask himself whether he shall represent or not, is a predicate. Hence in art, particular truths are usually more important than general ones.

How is it then that anything so plain as this should be contradicted by one of the most universally received aphorisms respecting art? A little reflection will show us under what limitations this maxim may be true in practice.

It is self-evident that when we are painting or describing anything, those truths must be the most important which are most characteristic of what is to be told or represented. Now that which is first and most broadly characteristic of a thing, is that which distinguishes its genus, or which makes it what it is. For instance, that which makes drapery *be* drapery, is not its being made of silk or worsted or flax, for things are made of all these which are not drapery, but the ideas peculiar to drapery; the properties which, when inherent in a thing, make it drapery, are extension, non-elastic flexibility, unity and comparative thinness. Everything which has these properties, a waterfall, for instance, if united and extended, or a net of weeds over a wall, is drapery, as much as silk or woollen stuff is. So that these ideas separate drapery in our minds from everything else; they are peculiarly characteristic of it, and therefore are the most important group of ideas connected with it; and so with everything else, that which makes the thing what it is, is the most important idea, or group of ideas connected with the thing. But as this idea must necessarily be common to all individuals of the species it belongs to, it is a general idea with respect to that species; while other ideas, which are not characteristic of the species, and are therefore in reality general, (as black or white are terms applicable to more things than drapery,) are yet particular with respect to that species, being predicable only of certain individuals of it. Hence it is carelessly and falsely said, that general ideas are more important than particular ones; carelessly and falsely, I say, because the so-called general idea is important, not because it is common to all the individuals of that species, but because it separates that species from everything else. It is the distinctiveness, not the universality of the truth, which renders it important. And the so-

§ 5. The importance of truths of species is not owing to their generality.

called particular idea is unimportant, not because it is not predicable of the whole species, but because it is predicable of things out of that species. It is not its individuality, but its

generality which renders it unimportant. So, then, truths are important just in proportion as

they are characteristic, and are valuable, primarily, as they separate the species from all other created things secondarily, as they separate the individuals of that species from one another : thus "silken" or "woollen" are unimportant ideas with respect to drapery, because they neither separate the species from other things, nor even the individuals of that species from one another, since, though not common to the whole of it, they are common to indefinite numbers of it ; but the particular folds into which any piece of drapery may happen to fall, being different in many particulars from those into which any other piece of drapery will fall, are expressive not only of the characters of the species, flexibility, (non-elasticity, etc..) but of individuality and definite character in the case immediately observed, and are consequently most important and necessary ideas. So in a man, to be short-legged or long-nosed or anything else of accidental quality, does not distinguish him from other short-legged or long-nosed animals ; but the important truths respecting a man are, first, the marked development of that distinctive organization which separates him as man from other animals, and secondly, that group of qualities which distinguish the individual from all other men, which make him Paul or Judas, Newton or Shakspeare.

§ 6. All truths valuable as they are characteristic

Such are the real sources of importance in truths as far as they are considered with reference merely to their being general, or particular ; but there are other sources of importance which give farther weight to the ordinary opinion of the greater value of those which are general, and which render this opinion right in practice ; I mean the intrinsic beauty of the truths themselves, a quality which it is not here the place to investigate, but which must just be noticed, as invariably adding value to truths of species rather than to those of individuality. The qualities and properties which characterize man or any other animal as a species, are the perfection of his or its form of mind, almost all in

§ 7. Otherwise truths of species are valuable, because beautiful.

dividual differences arising from imperfections ; hence a truth of species is the more valuable to art, because it must always be a beauty, while a truth of individuals is commonly, in some sort or way, a defect.

§ 8. And many truths, valuable if separate, may be objectionable in connection with others.

Again, a truth which may be of great interest, when an object is viewed by itself, may be objectionable when it is viewed in relation to other objects. Thus if we were painting a piece of drapery as our whole subject, it would be proper to give in it every source of entertainment, which particular truths could supply, to give it varied color and delicate texture ; but if we paint this same piece of drapery, as part of the dress of a Madonna, all these ideas of richness or texture become thoroughly contemptible, and unfit to occupy the mind at the same moment with the idea of the Virgin. The conception of drapery is then to be suggested by the simplest and slightest means possible, and all notions of texture and detail are to be rejected with utter reprobation ; but this, observe, is not because they are particular or general or anything else, with respect to the drapery itself, but because they draw the attention to the dress instead of the saint, and disturb and degrade the imagination and the feelings ; hence we ought to give the conception of the drapery in the most unobtrusive way possible, by rendering those essential qualities distinctly, which are necessary to the very existence of drapery, and not one more.

With these last two sources of the importance of truths, we have nothing to do at present, as they are dependent upon ideas of beauty and relation : I merely allude to them now, to show that all that is alleged by Sir J. Reynolds and other scientific writers respecting the kind of truths proper to be represented by the painter or sculptor is perfectly just and right ; while yet the principle on which they base their selection (that general truths are more important than particular ones) is altogether false. Canova's Perseus in the Vatican is entirely spoiled by an unlucky *tassel* in the folds of the mantle (which the next admirer of Canova who passes would do well to knock off ;) but it is spoiled not because this is a particular truth, but because it is a contemptible, unnecessary, and ugly truth. The button which fastens the vest of the Sistine Daniel is as much a partie-

ular truth as this, but it is a necessary one, and the idea of it is given by the simplest possible means ; hence it is right and beautiful.

Finally, then, it is to be remembered that all truths as far § 9. *Recapitulation.* as their being particular or general affects their value at all, are valuable in proportion as they are particular, and valueless in proportion as they are general ; or to express the proposition in simpler terms, every truth is valuable in proportion as it is characteristic of the thing of which it is affirmed.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS :—SECONDLY, THAT RARE TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FREQUENT ONES.

It will be necessary next for us to determine how far frequency or rarity can affect the importance of truths, and whether the artist is to be considered the most truthful who paints what is common or what is unusual in nature.

§ 1 No accidental violation of nature's principles should be represented.

Now the whole determination of this question depends upon whether the unusual fact be a violation of nature's general principles, or the application of some of those principles in a peculiar and striking way. Nature sometimes, though very rarely, violates her own principles ; it is her principle to make everything beautiful, but now and then, for an instant, she permits what, compared with the rest of her works, might be called ugly ; it is true that even these rare blemishes are permitted, as I have above said, for a good purpose, (Part I. Sec. I. Chap. 5,) they are valuable in nature, and used as she uses them, are equally valuable (as instantaneous discords) in art ; but the artist who should seek after these exclusively, and paint nothing else, though he might be able to point to something in nature as the original of every one of his uglinesses, would yet be, in the strict sense of the word, false,—false to nature, and disobedient to her laws. For instance, it is the practice of nature to give character to the outlines of her clouds, by perpetual angles and right lines. Perhaps once in a month, by diligent watching, we might be able to see a cloud altogether rounded and made up of curves ; but the artist who paints nothing but curved clouds must yet be considered thoroughly and inexcusably false.

But the case is widely different, when instead of a principle

violated, we have one extraordinarily carried out or manifested under unusual circumstances. Though nature is

§ 2. But the cases in which those principles have been strikingly exemplified.

constantly beautiful, she does not exhibit her highest powers of beauty constantly, for then they would satiate us and pall upon our senses. It is necessary to their appreciation that they should be rarely shown. Her finest touches are things which must be watched for; her most

§ 3. Which are comparatively rare.

perfect passages of beauty are the most evanescent. She is constantly doing something beautiful for us, but it is something which she has not done before and will not do again; some exhibition of her general powers in particular circumstances which, if we do not catch at the instant it is passing, will not be repeated for us. Now they are these evanescent passages of perfected beauty, these perpetually varied examples of utmost power, which the artist ought to seek for and arrest. No supposition can be more absurd than that effects or truths frequently exhibited are more characteristic of nature than those which are equally necessary by her laws, though rarer in occurrence. Both the frequent and the rare are parts of the same great system; to give either exclusively is imperfect truth, and to repeat the same effect or

§ 4. All repetition is blamable.

thought in two pictures is wasted life. What should we think of a poet who should keep all his life repeating the same thought in different words? and why should we be more lenient to the parrot-painter who has learned one lesson from the page of nature, and keeps stammering it out with eternal repetition without turning the leaf? Is it less tautology to describe a thing over and over again with lines, than it is with words? The teaching of nature is as varied and infinite as it is constant; and the duty of the painter is to watch for every one of her lessons, and to give (for human life will admit of nothing more) those in which she has manifested each of her principles in the most peculiar and striking way. The deeper his research and the rarer the phenomena he has noted, the more valuable will his works be; to repeat himself, even in a single instance, is treachery to nature, for a thousand human lives would not be enough to give one instance of the perfect manifestation of each of her powers; and as for combining or classifying them, as well might a preacher expect

in one sermon to express and explain every divine truth which can be gathered out of God's revelation, as a painter expect in

§ 5. The duty of the painter is the same as that of a preacher. one composition to express and illustrate every lesson which can be received from God's creation.

Both are commentators on infinity, and the duty of both is to take for each discourse one essential truth, seeking particularly and insisting especially on those which are less palpable to ordinary observation, and more likely to escape an indolent research ; and to impress that, and that alone, upon those whom they address, with every illustration that can be furnished by their knowledge, and every adornment attainable by their power. And the real truthfulness of the painter is in proportion to the number and variety of the facts he has so illustrated ; those facts being always, as above observed, the realization, not the violation of a general principle. The quantity of truth is in proportion to the number of such facts, and its value and instructiveness in proportion to their rarity. All really great pictures, therefore, exhibit the general habits of nature, manifested in some peculiar, rare, and beautiful way.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS :—THIRDLY, THAT TRUTHS OF COLOR ARE THE LEAST IMPORTANT OF ALL TRUTHS.

IN the two last chapters, we have pointed out general tests of the importance of all truths, which will be sufficient at once to distinguish certain classes of properties in bodies, as more necessary to be told than others, because more characteristic, either of the particular thing to be represented, or of the principles of nature.

§ 1. Difference between primary and secondary qualities in bodies.

According to Locke, Book ii. chap. 8, there are three sorts of qualities in bodies : first, the “ bulk, figure, number, situation, and motion or rest of their solid parts : those that are in them, whether we perceive them or not.” These he calls primary qualities. Secondly, “ the power that is in any body to operate after a peculiar manner on any of our senses,” (sensible qualities.) And thirdly, “ the power that is in any body to make such a change in another body as that it shall operate on our senses differently from what it did before : these last being usually called *powers*.”

Hence he proceeds to prove that those which he calls primary qualities are indeed part of the essence of the body, and characteristic of it ; but that the two other kinds of qualities which together he calls secondary, are neither of them more than *powers* of producing on other objects, or in us, certain effects and sensations. Now a power of influence is al-

§ 2. The first are fully characteristic, the second imperfectly so.

ways equally characteristic of two objects—the active and passive ; for it is as much necessary that there should be a power in the object suffering to receive the impression, as in the object acting to give the impression. (Compare Locke, Book ii. chap. 21, sect. 2.) For supposing two people, as is frequently the case, perceive different scents

in the same flower, it is evident that the power in the flower to give this or that depends on the nature of their nerves, as well as on that of its own particles ; and that we are as correct in saying it is a power in us to perceive, as in the object to impress. Every power, therefore, being characteristic of the nature of two bodies, is imperfectly and incompletely characteristic of either separately ; but the primary qualities, being characteristic only of the body in which they are inherent, are the most important truths connected with it. For the question, what the thing *is*, must precede, and be of more importance than the question, what can it do.

Now, by Locke's definition above given, only bulk, figure, situation, and motion or rest of solid parts, are primary qualities. Hence all truths of color sink at once into the second rank. He, therefore, who has neglected a truth of form for a truth of color, has neglected a greater truth for a less one.

And that color is indeed a most unimportant characteristic of objects, will be farther evident on the slightest consideration. The color of plants is constantly changing with the season, and of everything with the quality of light falling on it ; but the nature and essence of the thing are independent of these changes. An oak is an oak, whether green with spring or red with winter ; a dahlia is a dahlia, whether it be yellow or crimson ; and if some monster-hunting botanist should ever frighten the flower blue, still it will be a dahlia ; but let one curve of the petals—one groove of the stamens be wanting, and the flower ceases to be the same. Let the roughness of the bark and the angles of the boughs be smoothed or diminished, and the oak ceases to be an oak ; but let it retain its inward structure and outward form, and though its leaves grew white, or pink, or blue, or tri-color, it would be a white oak, or a pink oak, or a republican oak, but an

oak still. Again, color is hardly ever even a *possible* distinction between two objects of the same species. Two trees, of the same kind, at the same season, and of the same age, are of absolutely the same color ; but they are not of the same form, nor anything like it. There can be no difference in the color of two pieces of rock broken from the same place ; but it is impossible they should be of

§ 3. Color is a secondary quality, therefore less important than form.

§ 4. Color no distinction between objects of the same species.

the same form. So that form is not only the chief characteristic of species, but the only characteristic of individuals of a species.

§ 5. And different in association from what it is alone. Again, a color, in association with other colors, is different from the same color seen by itself. It has a distinct and peculiar power upon the retina dependent on its association. Consequently, the color of any object is not more dependent upon the nature of the object itself, and the eye beholding it, than on the color of the objects near it ; in this respect also, therefore, it is no characteristic.

§ 6. It is not certain whether any two people see the same colors in things. And so great is the uncertainty with respect to those qualities or powers which depend as much on the nature of the object suffering as of the object acting, that it is totally impossible to prove that one man sees in the same thing the same color that another does though he may use the same name for it. One man may see yellow where another sees blue, but as the effect is constant, they agree in the term to be used for it, and both call it blue, or both yellow, having yet totally different ideas attached to the term. And yet neither can be said to see falsely, because the color is not in the thing, but in the thing and them together. But if they see forms differently, one must see falsely, because the form is positive in the object. My friend may see boars blue for anything I know, but it is impossible he should see them with paws instead of hoofs, unless his eyes or brain are diseased. (Compare Locke, Book ii. chap. xxxii. § 15.) But I do not speak of this uncertainty as capable of having any effect on art, because, though perhaps Landseer sees dogs of the color which I should call blue, yet the color he puts on the canvas, being in the same way blue to him, will still be brown or dog-color to me ; and so we may argue on points of color just as if all men saw alike, as indeed in all probability they do ; but I merely mention this uncertainty to show farther the vagueness and unimportance of color as a characteristic of bodies.

§ 7. Form considered as an element of landscape, includes light and shade. Before going farther, however, I must explain the sense in which I have used the word " form," because painters have a most inaccurate and careless habit of confining the term to the *outline* of bodies, whereas it necessarily implies light and shade. It is true that the outline and the *chiaroscuro* must be separate sub-

jects of investigation with the student ; but no form whatsoever can be known to the eye in the slightest degree without its *chiaroscuro* ; and, therefore, in speaking of form generally as an element of landscape, I mean that perfect and harmonious unity of outline with light and shade, by which all the parts and projections and proportions of a body are fully explained to the eye, being nevertheless perfectly independent of sight or power in other objects, the presence of light upon a body being a positive existence, whether we are aware of it or not, and in no degree dependent upon our senses. This being understood, the most

convincing proof of the unimportance of color lies in the accurate observation of the way in which any material object impresses itself on the mind. § 8. Importance of light and shade in expressing the character of bodies and unimportance of color.

If we look at nature carefully, we shall find that her colors are in a state of perpetual confusion and indistinctness, while her forms, as told by light and shade, are invariably clear, distinct, and speaking. The stones and gravel of the bank catch green reflections from the boughs above ; the bushes receive grays and yellows from the ground ; every hairbreadth of polished surface gives a little bit of the blue of the sky or the gold of the sun, like a star upon the local color : this local color, changeful and uncertain in itself, is again disguised and modified by the hue of the light, or quenched in the gray of the shadow ; and the confusion and blending of tint is altogether so great, that were we left to find out what objects were by their colors only, we would scarcely in places distinguish the boughs of a tree from the air beyond them, or the ground beneath them. I know that people unpractised in art will not believe this at first ; but if they have accurate powers of observation, they may soon ascertain it for themselves ; they will find that, while they can scarcely ever determine the *exact* hue of anything, except when it occurs in large masses, as in a green field or the blue sky, the form, as told by light and shade, is always decided and evident, and the source of the chief character of every object. Light and shade indeed so completely conquer the distinctions of local color, that the difference in hue between the illumined parts of a white and black object is not so great as the difference (in sunshine) between the illumined and dark side of either separately.

We shall see hereafter, in considering ideas of beauty, that color, even as a source of pleasure, is feeble compared to form :

§ 9. Recapitulation. but this we cannot insist upon at present ; we have

only to do with simple truth, and the observations we have made are sufficient to prove that the artist who sacrifices or forgets a truth of form in the pursuit of a truth of color, sacrifices what is definite to what is uncertain, and what is essential to what is accidental.

CHAPTER VI.

RECAPITULATION.

IT ought farther to be observed respecting truths in general, that those are always most valuable which are most historical, that is, which tell us most about the past and future states of the object to which they belong. In a tree, for instance, it is more important to give the appearance of energy and elasticity in the limbs which is indicative of growth and life, than any particular character of leaf, or texture of bough. It is more important that we should feel that the uppermost sprays are creeping higher and higher into the sky, and be impressed with the current of life and motion which is animating every fibre, than that we should know the exact pitch of relief with which those fibres are thrown out against the sky. For the first truths tell us tales about the tree, about what it has been, and will be, while the last are characteristic of it only in its present state, and are in no way talkative about themselves. Talkative facts are always more interesting and more important than silent ones. So again the lines in a crag which mark its stratification, and how it has been washed and rounded by water, or twisted and drawn out in fire, are more important, because they tell more than the stains of the lichens which change year by year, and the accidental fissures of frost or decomposition; not but that both of these are historical, but historical in a less distinct manner, and for shorter periods.

§ 2. Form, as explained by light and shade, the first of all truths. Tone, light and color are secondary.

Hence in general the truths of specific form are the first and most important of all; and next to them, those truths of chiaroscuro which are necessary to make us understand every quality and part of forms, and the relative distances of objects among each other, and in consequence their relative bulks. Al-

together lower than these, as truths, though often most important as beauties, stand all effects of chiaroscuro which are productive merely of imitations of light and tone, and all effects of color. To make us understand the *space* of the sky, is an end worthy of the artist's highest powers ; to hit its particular blue or gold is an end to be thought of when we have accomplished the first, and not till then.

§ 3. And deceptive
chiaroscuro the
lowest of all.

Finally, far below all these come those particular accuracies or tricks of chiaroscuro which cause objects to look projecting from the canvas, not worthy of the name of truths, because they require for their attainment the sacrifice of all others ; for not having at our disposal the same intensity of light by which nature illustrates her objects, we are obliged, if we would have perfect deception in one, to destroy its relation to the rest. (Compare Sect. II. chap. V.) And thus he who throws one object out of his picture, never lets the spectator into it. Michael Angelo bids you follow his phantoms into the abyss of heaven, but a modern French painter drops his hero out of the picture frame.

This solidity or projection then, is the very lowest truth that art can give ; it is the painting of mere matter, giving that as food for the eye which is properly only the subject of touch ; it can neither instruct nor exalt, nor please except as jugglery ; it addresses no sense of beauty nor of power ; and wherever it characterizes the general aim of a picture, it is the sign and the evidence of the vilest and lowest mechanism which art can be insulted by giving name to.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING PRINCIPLES.

WE have seen, in the preceding chapters, some proof of what was before asserted, that the truths necessary for deceptive imitation are not only few, but of the very lowest order. We thus find painters ranging themselves into two great classes ; one aiming at the development of the exquisite truths of specific form, refined color, and ethereal space, and content with the clear and impressive suggestion of any of these, by whatsoever means obtained ; and the other casting all these aside, to attain those particular truths of tone and chiaroscuro, which may trick the spectator into a belief of reality. The first class, if they have to paint a tree, are intent upon giving the exquisite designs of intersecting undulation in its boughs, the grace of its leafage, the intricacy of its organization, and all those qualities which make it lovely or affecting of its kind. The second endeavor only to make you believe that you are looking at wood. They are totally regardless of truths or beauties of form ; a stump is as good as a trunk for all their purposes, so that they can only deceive the eye into the supposition that it *is* a stump and not canvas.

§ 1. The different selection of facts consequent on the several aims at imitation or at truth.

To which of these classes the great body of the old landscape painters belonged, may be partly gathered from the kind of praise which is bestowed upon them by those who admire them most, which either refers to technical matters, dexterity of touch, clever oppositions of color, etc., or is bestowed on the power of the painter to *deceive*. M. de Marmontel, going into a connoisseur's gallery, pretends to mistake a fine Berghem for a window. This, he says, was affirmed by its possessor to be the greatest praise the picture had ever received. Such is indeed the notion

§ 2. The old masters, as a body, aim only at imitation.

of art which is at the bottom of the veneration usually felt for the old landscape painters ; it is of course the palpable, first idea of ignorance ; it is the only notion which people unacquainted with art can by any possibility have of its ends ; the only test by which people unacquainted with nature can pretend to form anything like judgment of art. It is strange that, with the great historical painters of Italy before them, who had broken so boldly and indignantly from the trammels of this notion, and shaken the very dust of it from their feet, the succeeding landscape painters should have wasted their lives in jugglery : but so it is, and so it will be felt, the more we look into their

§ 3. What truths works, that the deception of the senses was the
they gave. great and first end of all their art. To attain this they paid deep and serious attention to effects of light and tone, and to the exact degree of relief which material objects take against light and atmosphere ; and sacrificing every other truth to these, not necessarily, but because they required no others for deception, they succeeded in rendering these particular facts with a fidelity and force which, in the pictures that have come down to us uninjured, are as yet unequalled, and never can be surpassed. They painted their foregrounds with laborious industry, covering them with details so as to render them deceptive to the ordinary eye, regardless of beauty or truth in the details themselves ; they painted their trees with careful attention to their pitch of shade against the sky, utterly regardless of all that is beautiful or essential in the anatomy of their foliage and boughs : they painted their distances with exquisite use of transparent color and aerial tone, totally neglectful of all facts and forms which nature uses such color and tone to relieve and adorn. They had neither love of nature, nor feeling of her beauty ; they looked for her coldest and most commonplace effects, because they were easiest to imitate ; and for her most vulgar forms, because they were most easily to be recognized by the untaught eyes of those whom alone they could hope to please ; they did it, like the Pharisee of old, to be seen of men, and they had their reward. They do deceive and delight the unpractised eye ; they will to all ages, as long as their colors endure, be the standards of excellence with all, who, ignorant of nature, claim to be thought learned in art. And they will to

all ages be, to those who have thorough love and knowledge of the creation which they libel, instructive proofs of the limited number and low character of the truths which are necessary, and the accumulated multitude of pure, broad, bold falsehoods which are admissible in pictures meant only to deceive.

There is of course more or less accuracy of knowledge and execution combined with this aim at effect, according to the industry and precision of eye possessed by the master, and more or less of beauty in the forms selected, according to his natural taste ; but both the beauty and truth are sacrificed unhesitatingly where they interfere with the great effort at deception. Claude had, if it had been cultivated, a fine feeling for beauty of form, and is seldom ungraceful in his foliage ; but his picture, when examined with reference to essential truth, is one mass of error from beginning to end. Cuyp, on the other hand, could paint close truth of everything, except ground and water, with decision and success, but he has no sense of beauty. Gaspar Poussin, more ignorant of truth than Claude, and almost as dead to beauty as Cuyp, has yet a perception of the feeling and moral truth of nature which often redeems the picture ; but yet in all of them, everything that they can do is done for deception, and nothing for the sake or love of what they are painting.

§ 4. The principles
of selection
adopted by
modern artists.

Modern landscape painters have looked at nature with totally different eyes, seeking not for what is easiest to imitate, but for what is most important to tell. Rejecting at once all idea of *bonâ fide* imitation, they think only of conveying the impression of nature into the mind of the spectator. And there is, in consequence, a greater sum of valuable, essential, and impressive truth in the works of two or three of our leading modern landscape painters, than in those of all the old masters put together, and of truth too, nearly unmixed with definite or avoidable falsehood, while the unimportant and feeble truths of the old masters are choked with a mass of perpetual defiance of the most authoritative laws of nature.

I do not expect this assertion to be believed at present ; it must rest for demonstration on the examination we are about to enter upon ; yet, even without reference to any intricate or

deep-laid truths, it appears strange to me, that any one familiar with nature, and fond of her, should not grow weary and sick

§ 5. General feeling of Claude, Salvator, and G. Poussin, contrasted with the freedom and vastness of nature.

at heart among the melancholy and monotonous transcripts of her which alone can be received from the old school of art. A man accustomed to the broad, wild sea-shore, with its bright breakers, and free winds, and sounding rocks, and eternal sensation of tameless power, can scarcely but be angered when Claude bids him stand still on some paltry, chipped and chiselled quay with porters and wheelbarrows running against him, to watch a weak, rippling bound and barriered water, that has not strength enough in one of its waves to upset the flower-pots on the wall, or even to fling one jet of spray over the confining stone. A man accustomed to the strength and glory of God's mountains, with their soaring and radiant pinnacles, and surging sweeps of measureless distance, kingdoms in their valleys, and climates upon their crests, can scarcely but be angered when Salvator bids him stand still under some contemptible fragment of splintery crag, which an Alpine snow-wreath would smother in its first swell, with a stunted bush or two growing out of it, and a volume of manufactory smoke for a sky. A man accustomed to the grace and infinity of nature's foliage, with every vista a cathedral, and every bough a revelation, can scarcely but be angered when Poussin mocks him with a black round mass of impenetrable paint, diverging into feathers instead of leaves, and supported on a stick instead of a trunk. The fact is, there is one thing wanting in all the doing of these men, and that is the very virtue by which the work of human mind chiefly rises above that of the Daguerreotype or Calotype, or any other mechanical means that ever have been or may be invented, Love : There is no evidence of their ever having gone to nature with any thirst, or received from her such emotion as could make them, even for an instant, lose sight of themselves ; there is in them neither earnestness nor humility ; there is no simple or honest record of any single truth : none of the plain words nor straight efforts that men speak and make when they once feel.

Nor is it only by the professed landscape painters that the great verities of the material world are betrayed : Grand as are

the motives of landscape in the works of the earlier and mightier men, there is yet in them nothing approaching to a general view nor complete rendering of natural phenomena ; not that they are to be blamed for this ; for they took out of nature that which was fit for their purpose, and their mission was to do no more ; but we must be cautious to distinguish that imaginative abstraction of landscape which alone we find in them, from the entire statement of truth which has been attempted by the moderns. I have said in the chapter on symmetry in the second volume, that all landscape grandeur vanishes before that of Titian and Tintoret ; and this is true of whatever these two giants touched ; —but they touched little. A few level flakes of chestnut foliage ; a blue abstraction of hill forms from Cadore or the Euganeans ; a grand mass or two of glowing ground and mighty herbage, and a few burning fields of quiet cloud were all they needed ; there is evidence of Tintoret's having felt more than this, but it occurs only in secondary fragments of rock, cloud, or pine, hardly noticed among the accumulated interest of his human subject. From the window of Titian's house at Venice, the chain of the Tyrolese Alps is seen lifted in spectral power above the tufted plain of Treviso ; every dawn that reddens the towers of Murano lights also a line of pyramidal fires along that colossal ridge ; but there is, so far as I know, no evidence in any of the master's works of his ever having beheld, much less felt, the majesty of their burning. The dark firmament and saddened twilight of Tintoret are sufficient for their end ; but the sun never plunges behind San Giorgio in Aliga without such retinue of radiant cloud, such rest of zoned light on the green lagoon, as never received image from his hand. More than this, of that which they loved and rendered much is rendered conventionally ; by noble conventionalities indeed, but such nevertheless as would be inexcusable if the landscape became the principal subject instead of an accompaniment. I will instance only the San Pietro Martire, which, if not the most perfect, is at least the most popular of Titian's landscapes ; in which, to obtain light on the flesh of the near figures the sky is made as dark as deep sea, the mountains are laid in with violent and impossible blue, except one of them on the

§ 6. Inadequacy
of the landscape
of Titian and
Tintoret.

left, which, to connect the distant light with the foreground, is thrown into light relief, unexplained by its materials, unlikely in its position, and in its degree impossible under any circumstances.

§ 7. Causes of its
want of influence
on subsequent
schools.

I do not instance these as faults in the picture : there are no works of very powerful color which are free from conventionality concentrated or diffused, daring or disguised ; but as the conventionality of this whole picture is mainly thrown into the landscape, it is necessary, while we acknowledge the virtue of this distance as a part of the great composition, to be on our guard against the license it assumes and the attractiveness of its overcharged color. Fragments of far purer truth occur in the works of Tintoret ; and in the drawing of foliage, whether rapid or elaborate, of masses or details, the Venetian painters, taken as a body, may be considered almost faultless models. But the whole field of what they have done is so narrow, and therein is so much of what is only relatively right, and in itself false or imperfect, that the young and inexperienced painter could run no greater risk than the too early taking them for teachers ; and to the general spectator their landscape is valuable rather as a means of peculiar and solemn emotion than as ministering to, or inspiring the universal love of nature. Hence while men of serious mind, especially those whose pursuits have brought them into continued relations with the peopled rather than the lonely world, will always look to the Venetian painters as having touched those simple chords of landscape harmony which are most in unison with earnest and melancholy feeling ; those whose philosophy is more cheerful and more extended, as having been trained and colored among simple and solitary nature, will seek for a wider and more systematic circle of teaching : they may grant that the barred horizontal gloom of the Titian sky, and the massy leaves of the Titian forest are among the most sublime of the conceivable forms of material things ; but they know that the virtue of these very forms is to be learned only by right comparison of them with the cheerfulness, fulness and comparative inquietness of other hours and scenes ; that they are not intended for the continual food, but the occasional soothing of the human heart ; that there is a lesson of not less

value in its place, though of less concluding and sealing authority, in every one of the more humble phases of material things : and that there are some lessons of equal or greater authority which these masters neither taught nor received. And until the school of modern landscape arose Art had never noted the links of this mighty chain ; it mattered not that a fragment lay here and there, no heavenly lightning could descend by it ; the landscape of the Venetians was without effect on any contemporary in subsequent schools ; it still remains on the continent as useless as if it had never existed ; and at this moment German and Italian landscapes, of which no words are scornful enough to besit the utter degradation, hang in the Venetian Academy in the next room to the Desert of Titian and the Paradise of Tintoret.*

§ 8. The value of inferior works of art how to be estimated.

That then which I would have the reader inquire respecting every work of art of undetermined merit submitted to his judgment, is not whether it be a work of especial grandeur, importance, or power ; but whether it have *any* virtue or substance as a link in this chain of truth, whether it have recorded or interpreted anything before unknown, whether it have added one single stone to our heaven-pointing pyramid, cut away one dark bough, or levelled one rugged hillock in our path. This, if it be an honest work of art, it must have done, for no man ever yet worked honestly without giving some such help to his race. God appoints to every one of his creatures a separate mission, and if they discharge it honorably, if they quit themselves like men and faithfully follow that light which is in them, withdrawing from it all cold and quenching influence, there will assuredly come of it such burning as, in its appointed mode and measure, shall shine before men, and be of service constant and holy. Degrees infinite of lustre there must always be, but the weakest among us has a gift, however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him,

* Not the large Paradise, but the Fall of Adam, a small picture chiefly in brown and gray, near Titian's Assumption. Its companion, the Death of Abel, is remarkable as containing a group of trees which Turner, I believe accidentally, has repeated nearly mass for mass in the " Marly." Both are among the most noble works of this or any other master, whether for preciousness of color or energy of thought.

and which worthily used will be a gift also to his race forever—

“Fool not,” says George Herbert,

“For all may have,
If they dare choose, a glorious life or grave.”

If, on the contrary, there be nothing of this freshness achieved, if there be neither purpose nor fidelity in what is done, if it be an envious or powerless imitation of other men's labors, if it be a display of mere manual dexterity or curious manufacture, or if in any other mode it show itself as having its origin in vanity,—Cast it out. It matters not what powers of mind may have been concerned or corrupted in it, all have lost their savor, it is worse than worthless ;—perilous—Cast it out.

Works of art are indeed always of mixed kind, their honesty being more or less corrupted by the various weaknesses of the painter, by his vanity, his idleness, or his cowardice ; (the fear of doing right has far more influence on art than is commonly thought,) that only is altogether to be rejected which is altogether vain, idle, and cowardly. Of the rest the rank is to be estimated rather by the purity of their metal than the coined value of it.

§ 9. Religious
landscape of
Italy. The ad-
mirableness of
its completion.

Keeping these principles in view, let us endeavor to obtain something like a general view of the assistance which has been rendered to our study of nature by the various occurrences of landscape in elder art, and by the more exclusively directed labors of modern schools.

To the ideal landscape of the early religious painters of Italy I have alluded in the concluding chapter of the second volume. It is absolutely right and beautiful in its peculiar application ; but its grasp of nature is narrow and its treatment in most respects too severe and conventional to form a profitable example when the landscape is to be alone the subject of thought. The great virtue of it is its entire, exquisite, and humble realization of those objects it selects ; in this respect differing from such German imitations of it as I have met with, that there is no effort of any fanciful or ornamental modifications, but loving fidelity to the thing studied. The foreground plants

are usually neither exaggerated nor stiffened ; they do not form arches or frames or borders ; their grace is unconfined, their simplicity undestroyed. Cima da Conegliano, in his picture in the church of the Madonna dell' Orto at Venice, has given us the oak, the fig, the beautiful " Erba della Madonna " on the wall, precisely such a bunch of it as may be seen growing at this day on the marble steps of that very church ; ivy and other creepers, and a strawberry plant in the foreground, with a blossom and a berry just set, and one half ripe and one ripe, all patiently and innocently painted from the real thing, and therefore most divine. Fra Angelico's use of the oxalis acetosella is as faithful in representation as touching in feeling.* The ferns that grow on the walls of Fiesole may be seen in their simple verity on the architecture of Ghirlandajo. The rose, the myrtle, and the lily, the olive and orange, pomegranate and vine, have received their fairest portraiture where they bear a sacred character ; even the common plantains and mallows of the waysides are touched with deep reverence by Raffaello ; and indeed for the perfect treatment of details of this kind, treatment as delicate and affectionate as it is elevated and manly, it is to the works of these schools alone that we can refer. And on this their peculiar excellence I should the more earnestly insist, because it is of a kind altogether neglected by the English school, and with most unfortunate result, many of our best painters missing their deserved rank solely from the want of it, as Gainsborough ; and all being more or less checked in their progress or vulgarized in their aim.

§ 10. Finish, and the want of it, how right and how wrong.

It is a misfortune for all honest critics, that hardly any quality of art is independently to be praised, and without reference to the motive from which it resulted, and the place in which it appears ; so that no principle can be simply enforced but it shall seem to countenance a vice ; while the work of qualification and explanation both weakens the force of what is said, and is not perhaps always likely to be with patience received : so also those who de-

* The triple leaf of this plant, and white flower, stained purple, probably gave it strange typical interest among the Christian painters. Angelico, in using its leaves mixed with daisies in the foreground of his Crucifixion had, I imagine, a view also to its chemical property.

sire to misunderstand or to oppose have it always in their power to become obtuse listeners or specious opponents. Thus I hardly dare insist upon the virtue of completion, lest I should be supposed a defender of Wouvermans or Gerard Dow ; neither can I adequately praise the power of Tintoret, without fearing to be thought adverse to Holbein or Perugino. The fact is, that both finish and impetuosity, specific minuteness, or large abstraction, may be the signs of passion, or of its reverse ; may result from affection or indifference, intellect or dulness. Some men finish from intense love of the beautiful in the smallest parts of what they do ; others in pure incapability of comprehending anything but parts ; others to show their dexterity with the brush, and prove expenditure of time. Some are impetuous and bold in their handling, from having great thoughts to express which are independent of detail ; others because they have bad taste or have been badly taught ; others from vanity, and others from indolence. (Compare Vol. II. Chap. IX. § 8.) Now both the finish and incompletion are right where they are the signs of passion or of thought, and both are wrong, and I think the finish the more contemptible of the two, when they cease to be so. The modern Italians will paint every leaf of a laurel or rose-bush without the slightest feeling of their beauty or character ; and without showing one spark of intellect or affection from beginning to end. Anything is better than this ; and yet the very highest schools *do* the same thing, or nearly so, but with totally different motives and perceptions, and the result is divine. On the whole, I conceive that the extremes of good and evil lie with the finishers, and that whatever glorious power we may admit in men like Tintoret, whatever attractiveness of method to Rubens, Rembrandt, or, though in far less degree, our own Reynolds, still the thoroughly great men are those who have done everything thoroughly, and who, in a word, have never despised anything, however small, of God's making. And this is the chief fault of our English landscapists, that they have not the intense all-observing penetration of well-balanced mind ; they have not, except in one or two instances, anything of that feeling which Wordsworth shows in the following lines :—

“ So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive ;—
 Would that the little flowers were born to live
 Conscious of half the pleasure which they give.
 That to this mountain daisy’s self were known
*The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
 On the smooth surface of this naked stone.*”

That is a little bit of good, downright, foreground painting —no mistake about it : daisy, and shadow, and stone texture and all. Our painters must come to this before they have done their duty : and yet, on the other hand, let them beware of finishing, for the sake of finish, all over their picture. The ground is not to be all over daisies, nor is every daisy to have its star-shaped shadow ; there is as much finish in the right concealment of things as in the right exhibition of them ; and while I demand this amount of specific character where nature shows it, I demand equal fidelity to her where she conceals it. To paint mist rightly, space rightly, and light rightly, it may be often necessary to paint nothing else rightly, but the rule is simple for all that ; if the artist is painting something that he knows and loves, as he knows it because he loves it, whether it be the fair strawberry of Cima, or the clear sky of Francia, or the blazing incomprehensible mist of Turner, he is all right ; but the moment he does anything as he thinks it ought to be, because he does not care about it, he is all wrong. He has only to ask himself whether he cares for anything except himself : so far as he does he will make a good picture ; so far as he thinks of himself a vile one. This is the root of the viciousness of the whole French school. Industry they have, learning they have, power they have, feeling they have, yet not so much feeling as ever to force them to forget themselves even for a moment ; the ruling motive is invariably vanity, and the picture therefore an abortion.

§ 11. The open
 skies of the re-
 ligious schools,
 how valuable.
 Mountain draw-
 ing of Masaccio.
 Landscape of the
 Bellinis and
 Giorgione.

Returning to the pictures of the religious schools, we find that their open skies are also of the highest value. Their preciousness is such that no subsequent schools can by comparison be said to have painted sky at all, but only clouds, or mist, or blue canopies. The golden sky of Marco Basaiti in the Academy of Venice altogether overpowers and renders value-

less that of Titian beside it. Those of Francia in the gallery of Bologna are even more wonderful, because cooler in tone and behind figures in full light. The touches of white light in the horizon of Angelico's Last Judgment are felt and wrought with equal truth. The dignified and simple forms of cloud in repose are often by these painters sublimely expressed, but of changeful cloud form they show no examples. The architecture, mountains, and water of these distances are commonly conventional; motives are to be found in them of the highest beauty, and especially remarkable for quantity and meaning of incident; but they can only be studied or accepted in the particular feeling that produced them. It may generally be observed that whatever has been the result of strong emotion is ill seen unless through the medium of such emotion, and will lead to conclusions utterly false and perilous, if it be made a subject of cold-hearted observance, or an object of systematic imitation. One piece of genuine mountain drawing, however, occurs in the landscape of Masaccio's Tribute Money. It is impossible to say what strange results might have taken place in this particular field of art, or how suddenly a great school of landscape might have arisen, had the life of this great painter been prolonged. Of this particular fresco I shall have much to say hereafter. The two brothers Bellini gave a marked and vigorous impulse to the landscape of Venice, of Gentile's architecture I shall speak presently. Giovanni's, though in style less interesting and in place less prominent, occurring chiefly as a kind of frame to his pictures, connecting them with the architecture of the churches for which they were intended, is in refinement of realization, I suppose, quite unrivalled, especially in passages requiring pure gradation, as the hollows of vaultings. That of Veronese would look ghostly beside it; that of Titian lightless. His landscape is occasionally quaint and strange like Giorgione's, and as fine in color, as that behind the Madonna in the Brera gallery at Milan; but a more truthful fragment occurs in the picture in San Francesco della Vigna at Venice; and in the picture of St. Jerome in the church of San Grisostomo, the landscape is as perfect and beautiful as any background may legitimately be, and finer, as far as it goes, than anything of Titian's. It is remarkable for the absolute truth of its sky,

whose blue, clear as crystal, and though deep in tone bright as the open air, is gradated to the horizon with a cautiousness and finish almost inconceivable; and to obtain light at the horizon without contradicting the system of chiaroscuro adopted in the figures which are lighted from the right hand, it is barred across with some glowing white cirri which, in their turn, are opposed by a single dark horizontal line of lower cloud; and to throw the whole farther back, there is a wreath of rain cloud of warmer color floating above the mountains, lighted on its under edge, whose faithfulness to nature, both in hue and in its light and shattering form, is altogether exemplary; the wandering of the light among the hills is equally studied, and the whole is crowned by the grand realization of the leaves of the fig-tree alluded to (Vol. II. Part III. Chap. 5,) as well as of the herbage upon the rocks. Considering that with all this care and completeness in the background, there is nothing that is not of meaning and necessity in reference to the figures, and that in the figures themselves the dignity and heavenliness of the highest religious painters are combined with a force and purity of color, greater I think than Titian's, it is a work which may be set before the young artist as in every respect a nearly faultless guide. Giorgione's landscape is inventive and solemn, but owing to the rarity even of his nominal works I dare not speak of it in general terms. It is certainly conventional, and is rather, I imagine, to be studied for its color and its motives than its details.

Of Titian and Tintoret I have spoken already.

§ 12. Landscape
of Titian and
Tintoret.

The latter is every way the greater master, never indulging in the exaggerated color of Titian, and attaining far more perfect light; his grasp of nature is more extensive, and his view of her more imaginative, (incidental notices of his landscape will be found in the chapter on Imagination penetrative, of the second volume,) but he is usually too impatient to carry his thoughts as far out, or to realize with as much substantiality as Titian. In the St. Jerome of the latter in the gallery of the Brera, there is a superb example of the modes in which the objects of landscape may be either suggested or elaborated according to their place and claim. The larger features of the ground, foliage, and drapery, as well as the lion in the lower angle, are executed with a slighness which admits

not of close examination, and which, if not in shade, would be offensive to the generality of observers. But on the rock above the lion, where it turns towards the light, and where the eye is intended to dwell, there is a wreath of ivy of which every leaf is separately drawn with the greatest accuracy and care, and beside it a lizard, studied with equal earnestness, yet always with that right grandeur of manner to which I have alluded in the preface. Tintoret seldom reaches or attempts the elaboration in substance and color of these objects, but he is even more truth-telling and certain in his rendering of all the great characters of specific form, and as the painter of Space he stands altogether alone among dead masters ; being the first who introduced the slightness and confusion of touch which are expressive of the effects of luminous objects seen through large spaces of air, and the principles of aerial color which have been since carried out in other fields by Turner. I conceive him to be the most powerful painter whom the world has seen, and that he was prevented from being also the most perfect, partly by untoward circumstances in his position and education, partly by the very fulness and impetuosity of his own mind, partly by the want of religious feeling and its accompanying perception of beauty ; for his noble treatment of religious subject, of which I have given several examples in the third part, appears to be the result only of that grasp which a great and well-toned intellect necessarily takes of any subject submitted to it, and is wanting in the signs of the more withdrawn and sacred sympathies.

But whatever advances were made by Tintoret in modes of artistical treatment, he cannot be considered as having enlarged the sphere of landscape conception. He took no cognizance even of the materials and motives, so singularly rich in color, which were forever around him in his own Venice. All portions of Venetian scenery introduced by him are treated conventionally and carelessly ; the architectural characters lost altogether, the sea distinguished from the sky only by a darker green, while of the sky itself only those forms were employed by him which had been repeated again and again for centuries, though in less tangibility and completion. Of mountain scenery he has left, I believe, no example so far carried as that of John Bellini above instanced.

The Florentine and Ambrian schools supply us
 § 13. Schools of
 Florence. Milan,
 and Bologna. with no examples of landscape, except that intro-
 duced by their earliest masters, gradually over-
 whelmed under renaissance architecture.

Leonardo's landscape has been of unfortunate effect on art, so far as it has had effect at all. In realization of detail he verges on the ornamental, in his rock outlines he has all the deficiencies and little of the feeling of the earlier men. Behind the "Sacrifice for the Friends" of Giotto at Pisa, there is a sweet piece of rock incident, a little fountain breaking out at the mountain foot, and trickling away, its course marked by branches of reeds, the latter formal enough certainly, and always in triplets, but still with a sense of nature pervading the whole which is utterly wanting to the rocks of Leonardo in the Holy Family in the Louvre. The latter are grotesque without being ideal, and extraordinary without being impressive. The sketch in the Uffizii of Florence has some fine foliage, and there is of course a certain virtue in all the work of a man like Leonardo which I would not depreciate, but our admiration of it in this particular field must be qualified, and our following cautious.

No advances were made in landscape, so far as I know, after the time of Tintoret; the power of art ebbed gradually away from the derivative schools: various degrees of cleverness or feeling being manifested in more or less brilliant conventionalism. I once supposed there was some life in the landscape of Domenichino, but in this I must have been wrong. The man who painted the Madonna del Rosario and Martyrdom of St. Agnes in the gallery of Bologna, is palpably incapable of doing anything good, great, or right in any field, way, or kind, whatsoever.*

* This is no rash method of judgment, sweeping and hasty as it may appear. From the weaknesses of an artist, or failures, however numerous, we have no right to conjecture his total inability: a time may come when he may rise into sudden strength, or an instance occur when his efforts shall be successful. But there are some pictures which rank not under the head of failures, but of perpetrations or commissions: some things which a man cannot do nor say without sealing forever his character and capacity. The angel holding the cross with his finger in his eye, the roaring red-faced chil-

§ 14. Claude, Salvator, and the Poussins.

Though, however, at this period the general grasp of the schools was perpetually contracting, a gift was given to the world by Claude, for which we are perhaps hardly enough grateful, owing to the very frequency of our after enjoyment of it. He set the sun in heaven, and was, I suppose, the first who attempted anything like the realization of actual sunshine in misty air. He gives the first example of the study of nature for her own sake, and allowing for the unfortunate circumstances of his education, and for his evident inferiority of intellect, more could hardly have been expected from him. His false taste, forced composition, and ignorant rendering of detail have perhaps been of more detriment to art than the gift he gave was of advantage. The character of his own mind is singular; I know of no other instance of a man's working from nature continually with the desire of being true, and never attaining the power of drawing so much as a bough of a tree rightly. Salvator, a man originally endowed with far higher power of mind than Claude, was altogether unfaithful to his mission, and has left us, I believe, no gift. Everything that he did is evidently for the sake of exhibiting his own dexterity; there is no love of any kind for anything; his choice of landscape features is dictated by no delight in the sublime, but by mere animal restlessness or ferocity, guided by an imaginative power of which he could not altogether deprive himself. He has done nothing which others have not done better, or which it would not have been better not to have done; in

dren about the crown of thorns, the blasphemous (I speak deliberately and determinedly) head of Christ upon the handkerchief, and the mode in which the martyrdom of the saint is exhibited (I do not choose to use the expressions which alone could characterize it) are perfect, sufficient, incontrovertible proofs that whatever appears good in any of the doings of such a painter must be deceptive, and that we may be assured that our taste is corrupted and false whenever we feel disposed to admire him. I am prepared to support this position, however uncharitable it may seem; a man may be tempted into a gross sin by passion, and forgiven; and yet there are some kinds of sins into which only men of a certain kind can be tempted, and which cannot be forgiven. It should be added, however, that the artistical qualities of these pictures are in every way worthy of the conceptions they realize; I do not recollect any instances of color or execution so coarse and feelingless.

nature, he mistakes distortion for energy, and savageness for sublimity ; in man, mendicity for sanctity, and conspiracy for heroism.

The landscape of Nicolo Poussin shows much power, and is usually composed and elaborated on right principles, (compare preface to second edition,) but I am aware of nothing that it has attained of new or peculiar excellence ; it is a graceful mixture of qualities to be found in other masters in higher degrees. In finish it is inferior to Leonardo's, in invention to Giorgione's, in truth to Titian's, in grace to Raffaele's. The landscapes of Gaspar have serious feeling and often valuable and solemn color ; virtueless otherwise, they are full of the most degraded mannerism, and I believe the admiration of them to have been productive of extensive evil among recent schools.

§ 15. German and
Flemish land-
scape. The development of landscape north of the Alps, presents us with the same general phases under modifications dependent partly on less intensity of feeling, partly on diminished availableness of landscape material. That of the religious painters is treated with the same affectionate completion ; but exuberance of fancy sometimes diminishes the influence of the imagination, and the absence of the Italian force of passion admits of more patient and somewhat less intellectual elaboration. A morbid habit of mind is evident in many, seeming to lose sight of the balance and relations of things, so as to become intense in trifles, gloomily minute, as in Albert Durer ; and this mingled with a feverish operation of the fancy, which appears to result from certain habitual conditions of bodily health rather than of mental culture, (and of which the sickness without the power is eminently characteristic of the modern Germans ;) but with all this there are virtues of the very highest order in those schools, and I regret that my knowledge is insufficient to admit of my giving any detailed account of them.

In the landscape of Rembrandt and Rubens, we have the northern parallel to the power of the Venetians. Among the etchings and drawings of Rembrandt, landscape thoughts may be found not unworthy of Titian, and studies from nature of sublime fidelity ; but his system of chiaroscuro was inconsistent with the gladness, and his peculiar modes of feeling with the

grace, of nature : nor from my present knowledge can I name any work on canvas in which he has carried out the dignity of his etched conceptions, or exhibited any perceptiveness of new truths.

Not so Rubens, who perhaps furnishes us with the first instances of complete unconventional unaffected landscape. His treatment is healthy, manly, and rational, not very affectionate, yet often condescending to minute and multitudinous detail ; always as far as it goes pure, forcible, and refreshing, consummate in composition, and marvellous in color. In the Pitti palace, the best of its two Rubens landscapes has been placed near a characteristic and highly-finished Titian, the marriage of St. Catherine. But for the grandeur of line and solemn feeling in the flock of sheep, and the figures of the latter work, I doubt if all its glow and depth of tone could support its overcharged green and blue against the open breezy sunshine of the Fleming. I do not mean to rank the art of Rubens with that of Titian, but it is always to be remembered that Titian hardly ever paints sunshine, but a certain opalescent twilight which has as much of human emotion as of imitative truth in it,—

“ The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o’er man’s mortality :”

and that art of this kind must always be liable to some appearance of failure when compared with a less pathetic statement of facts.

It is to be noted, however, that the licenses taken by Rubens in particular instances are as bold as his general statements are sincere. In the landscape just instanced the horizon is an oblique line ; in the *Sunset* of our own gallery many of the shadows fall at right angles to the light ; and in a picture in the Dulwich gallery a rainbow is seen by the spectator at the side of the sun.

These bold and frank licenses are not to be considered as detracting from the rank of the painter ; they are usually characteristic of those minds whose grasp of nature is so certain and extensive as to enable them fearlessly to sacrifice a truth of actuality to a truth of feeling. Yet the young artist must keep

in mind that the painter's greatness consists not in his taking, but in his atoning for them.

§ 16. The lower Dutch schools.

Among the professed landscapists of the Dutch school, we find much dexterous imitation of certain kinds of nature, remarkable usually for its persevering rejection of whatever is great, valuable, or affecting in the object studied. Where, nowever, they show real desire to paint what they saw as far as they saw it, there is of course much in them that is instructive, as in Cuyp and in the etchings of Waterloo, which have even very sweet and genuine feeling; and so in some of their architectural painters. But the object of the great body of them is merely to display manual dexterities of one kind or another, and their effect on the public mind is so totally for evil, that though I do not deny the advantage an artist of real judgment may derive from the study of some of them, I conceive the best patronage that any monarch could possibly bestow upon the arts, would be to collect the whole body of them into a grand gallery and burn it to the ground.

§ 17. English school, Wilson and Gainsborough.

Passing to the English school, we find a connecting link between them and the Italians formed by Richard Wilson. Had this artist studied under favorable circumstances, there is evidence of his having possessed power enough to produce an original picture; but, corrupted by study of the Poussins, and gathering his materials chiefly in their field, the district about Rome—a district especially unfavorable, as exhibiting no pure or healthy nature, but a diseased and overgrown Flora among half-developed volcanic rocks, loose calcareous concretions, and mouldering wrecks of buildings—and whose spirit, I conceive, to be especially opposed to the natural tone of the English mind, his originality was altogether overpowered, and, though he paints in a manly way and occasionally reaches exquisite tones of color, as in the small and very precious picture belonging to Mr. Rogers, and sometimes manifests some freshness of feeling, as in the Villa of Mæcenas of our National Gallery, yet his pictures are in general mere diluted adaptations from Poussin and Salvator, without the dignity of the one or the fire of the other.

Not so Gainsborough, a great name his whether of the Eng-

lish or any other school. The greatest colorist since Rubens, and the last, I think, of legitimate colorists ; that is to say, of those who were fully acquainted with the power of their material ; pure in his English feeling, profound in his seriousness, graceful in his gayety, there are nevertheless certain deductions to be made from his worthiness which yet I dread to make, because my knowledge of his landscape works is not extensive enough to justify me in speaking of them decisively ; but this is to be noted of all that I know, that they are rather motives of feeling and color than earnest studies ; that their execution is in some degree mannered, and always hasty ; that they are altogether wanting in the affectionate detail of which I have already spoken ; and that their color is in some measure dependent on a bituminous brown and conventional green which have more of science than of truth in them. These faults may be sufficiently noted in the magnificent picture presented by him to the Royal Academy, and tested by a comparison of it with the Turner (*Llanberis*,) in the same room. Nothing can be more attractively luminous or aerial than the distance of the Gainsborough, nothing more bold or inventive than the forms of its crags and the diffusion of the broad distant light upon them, where a vulgar artist would have thrown them into dark contrast. But it will be found that the light of the distance is brought out by a violent exaggeration of the gloom in the valley ; that the forms of the green trees which bear the chief light are careless and ineffective ; that the markings of the crags are equally hasty ; and that no object in the foreground has realization enough to enable the eye to rest upon it. The Turner, a much feebler picture in its first impression, and altogether inferior in the quality and value of its individual hues, will yet be found in the end more forcible, because unexaggerated ; its gloom is moderate and aerial, its light deep in tone, its color entirely unconventional, and the forms of its rocks studied with the most devoted care. With Gainsborough terminates the series of painters connected with the elder schools. By whom, among those yet living or lately lost, the impulse was first given to modern landscape, I attempt not to decide. Such questions are rather invidious than interesting ; the particular tone or direction of any school seems to me always to have resulted rather

from certain phases of national character, limited to particular periods, than from individual teaching ; and, especially among moderns, what has been good in each master has been commonly original.

§ 18. Constable, Calcott. I have already alluded to the simplicity and earnestness of the mind of Constable ; to its vigorous rupture with school laws, and to its unfortunate error on the opposite side. Unteachableness seems to have been a main feature of his character, and there is corresponding want of veneration in the way he approaches nature herself. His early education and associations were also against him ; they induced in him a morbid preference of subjects of a low order. I have never seen any work of his in which there were any signs of his being able to draw, and hence even the most necessary details are painted by him inefficiently. His works are also eminently wanting both in rest and refinement, and Fuseli's jesting compliment is too true ; for the showery weather in which the artist delights, misses alike the majesty of storm and the loveliness of calm weather : it is great-coat weather, and nothing more. There is strange want of depth in the mind which has no pleasure in sunbeams but when piercing painfully through clouds, nor in foliage but when shaken by the wind, nor in light itself but when flickering, glistening, restless, and feeble. Yet, with all these deductions, his works are to be deeply respected as thoroughly original, thoroughly honest, free from affectation, manly in manner, frequently successful in cool color, and especially realizing certain motives of English scenery with perhaps as much affection as such scenery, unless when regarded through media of feeling derived from higher sources, is calculated to inspire.

On the works of Calcott, high as his reputation stands, I should look with far less respect ; I see not any preference or affection in the artist ; there is no tendency in him with which we can sympathize, nor does there appear any sign of aspiration, effort, or enjoyment in any one of his works. He appears to have completed them methodically, to have been content with them when completed, to have thought them good, legitimate, regular pictures ; perhaps in some respects better than nature. He painted everything tolerably, and nothing excellently ; he

has given us no gift, struck for us no light, and though he has produced one or two valuable works, of which the finest I know is the *Marine* in the possession of Sir J. Swinburne, they will, I believe, in future have no place among those considered representative of the English school.

§ 19. Peculiar
tendency of re-
cent landscape.

Throughout the range of elder art it will be remembered we have found no instance of the faithful painting of mountain scenery, except in a faded background of Masaccio's: nothing more than rocky eminences, undulating hills, or fantastic crags, and even these treated altogether under typical forms. The more specific study of mountains seems to have coincided with the most dexterous practice of water-color; but it admits of doubt whether the choice of subject has been directed by the vehicle, or whether, as I rather think, the tendency of national feeling has been followed in the use of the most appropriate means. Something is to be attributed to the increased demand for slighter works of art, and much to the sense of the quality of objects now called picturesque, which appears to be exclusively of modern origin. From what feeling the character of middle-age architecture and costume arose, or with what kind of affection their forms were regarded by the inventors, I am utterly unable to guess; but of this I think we may be assured, that the natural instinct and child-like wisdom of those days were altogether different from the modern feeling, which appears to have taken its origin in the absence of such objects, and to be based rather on the strangeness of their occurrence than on any real affection for them; and which is certainly so shallow and ineffective as to be instantly and always sacrificed by the majority to fashion, comfort, or economy. Yet I trust that there is a healthy though feeble love of nature mingled with it, nature pure, separate, felicitous, which is also peculiar to the moderns; and as signs of this feeling, or ministers to it, I look with veneration upon many works which, in a technical point of view, are of minor importance.

§ 20. G. Robson, D.
Cox. False use of
the term "style."

I have been myself indebted for much teaching and more delight to those of the late G. Robson. Weaknesses there are in them manifold, much bad drawing, much forced color, much over finish, little of what

artists call composition ; but there is thorough affection for the thing drawn ; they are serious and quiet in the highest degree. certain qualities of atmosphere and texture in them have never been excelled, and certain facts of mountain scenery never but by them expressed, as, for instance, the stillness and depth of the mountain tarns, with the reversed imagery of their darkness signed across by the soft lines of faintly touching winds ; the solemn flush of the brown fern and glowing heath under evening light ; the purple mass of mountains far removed, seen against clear still twilight. With equal gratitude I look to the drawings of David Cox, which, in spite of their loose and seemingly careless execution, are not less serious in their meaning, nor less important in their truth. I must, however, in reviewing those modern works in which certain modes of execution are particularly manifested, insist especially on this general principle, applicable to all times of art ; that what is usually called the style or manner of an artist is, in all good art, nothing but the best means of getting at the particular truth which the artist wanted ; it is not a mode peculiar to himself of getting at the same truths as other men, but the *only* mode of getting the particular facts he desires, and which mode, if others had desired to express those facts, they also must have adopted. All habits of execution persisted in under no such necessity, but because the artist has invented them, or desires to show his dexterity in them, are utterly base ; for every good painter finds so much difficulty in reaching the end he sees and desires, that he has no time nor power left for playing tricks on the road to it ; he catches at the easiest and best means he can get ; it is possible that such means may be singular, and then it will be said that his *style* is strange ; but it is not a style at all, it is the saying of a particular thing in the only way in which it possibly can be said. Thus the reed pen outline and peculiar touch of Prout, which are frequently considered as mere manner, are in fact the only means of expressing the crumbling character of stone which the artist loves and desires. That character never has been expressed except by him, nor will it ever be expressed except by his means. And it is of the greatest importance to distinguish this kind of necessary and virtuous manner from the conventional manners very frequent in derivative schools,

and always utterly to be contemned, wherein an artist, desiring nothing and feeling nothing, executes everything in his own particular mode, and teaches emulous scholars how to do with difficulty what might have been done with ease. It is true that there are sometimes instances in which great masters have employed different means of getting at the same end, but in these cases their choice has been always of those which to them appeared the shortest and most complete; their practice has never been prescribed by affectation or continued from habit, except so far as must be expected from such weakness as is common to all men; from hands that necessarily do most readily what they are most accustomed to do, and minds always liable to prescribe to the hands that which they can do most readily.

The recollection of this will keep us from being offended with the loose and blotted handling of David Cox. There is no other means by which his object could be attained. The looseness, coolness, and moisture of his herbage; the rustling crumpled freshness of his broad-leaved weeds: the play of pleasant light across his deep heathered moor or plashing sand; the melting of fragments of white mist into the dropping blue above; all this has not been fully recorded except by him, and what there is of accidental in his mode of reaching it, answers gracefully to the accidental part of nature herself. Yet he is capable of more than this, and if he suffers himself uniformly to paint beneath his capability, that which began in feeling must necessarily end in manner. He paints too many small pictures, and perhaps has of late permitted his peculiar execution to be more manifest than is necessary. Of this, he is himself the best judge. For almost all faults of this kind the public are answerable, not the painter. I have alluded to one of his grander works—such as I should wish always to see him paint—in the preface; another, I think still finer, a red sunset on distant hills, almost unequalled for truth and power of color, was painted by him several years ago, and remains, I believe, in his own possession.

§ 21. Copley
Fielding.
Phenomena of
distant color.

The deserved popularity of Copley Fielding has rendered it less necessary for me to allude frequently to his works in the following pages than it would otherwise have been, more especially as my own sympathies and enjoyments are so entirely directed in the channel which his art

has taken, that I am afraid of trusting them too far. Yet I may, perhaps, be permitted to speak of myself so far as I suppose my own feelings to be representative of those of a class ; and I suppose that there are many who, like myself, at some period of their life have derived more intense and healthy pleasure from the works of this painter than of any other whatsoever ; healthy, because always based on his faithful and simple rendering of nature, and that of very lovely and impressive nature, altogether freed from coarseness, violence, or vulgarity. Various references to that which he has attained will be found subsequently : what I am now about to say respecting what he has *not* attained, is not in depreciation of what he has accomplished, but in regret at his suffering powers of a high order to remain in any measure dormant.

He indulges himself too much in the use of crude color. Pure cobalt, violent rose, and purple, are of frequent occurrence in his distances ; pure siennas and other browns in his foregrounds, and that not as expressive of lighted but of local color. The reader will find in the following chapters that I am no advocate for subdued coloring ; but crude color is not bright color, and there was never a noble or brilliant work of color yet produced, whose real form did not depend on the subduing of its tints rather than the elevation of them.

It is perhaps one of the most difficult lessons to learn in art, that the warm colors of distance, even the most glowing, are subdued by the air so as in no wise to resemble the same color seen on a foreground object ; so that the rose of sunset on clouds or mountains has a gray in it which distinguishes it from the rose color of the leaf of a flower ; and the mingling of this gray of distance, without in the slightest degree taking away the expression of the intense and perfect purity of the color in and by itself, is perhaps the last attainment of the great landscape colorist. In the same way the blue of distance, however intense, is not the blue of a bright blue flower, and it is not distinguished from it by different texture merely, but by a certain intermixture and under current of warm color, which is altogether wanting in many of the blues of Fielding's distances ; and so of every bright distant color ; while in foreground where colors may be, and ought to be, pure, yet that any of them are

expressive of light is only to be felt where there is the accurate fitting of them to their relative shadows which we find in the works of Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, Veronese, Turner, and all other great colorists in proportion as they are so. Of this fitting of light to shadow Fielding is altogether regardless, so that his foregrounds are constantly assuming the aspect of over-charged local color instead of sunshine, and his figures and cattle look transparent.

§ 22. Beauty of mountain foreground. Again, the finishing of Fielding's foregrounds, as regards their drawing, is minute without accuracy, multitudinous without thought, and confused without mystery. Where execution is seen to be in measure accidental, as in Cox, it may be received as representative of what is accidental in nature ; but there is no part of Fielding's foreground that is accidental ; it is evidently worked and re-worked, dotted, rubbed, and finished with great labor, and where the virtue, playfulness, and freedom of accident are thus removed, one of two virtues must be substituted for them. Either we must have the deeply studied and imaginative foreground, of which every part is necessary to every other, and whose every spark of light is essential to the well-being of the whole, of which the foregrounds of Turner in the *Liber Studiorum* are the most eminent examples I know, or else we must have in some measure the botanical faithfulness and realization of the early masters. Neither of these virtues is to be found in Fielding's. Its features, though grouped with feeling, are yet scattered and inessential. Any one of them might be altered in many ways without doing harm ; there is no proportioned, necessary, unalterable relation among them ; no evidence of invention or of careful thought, while on the other hand there is no botanical or geological accuracy, nor any point on which the eye may rest with thorough contentment in its realization.

It seems strange that to an artist of so quick feeling the details of a mountain foreground should not prove irresistibly attractive, and entice him to greater accuracy of study. There is not a fragment of its living rock, nor a tuft of its heathery herbage, that has not adorable manifestations of God's working thereupon. The harmonies of color among the native lichens

are better than Titian's ; the interwoven bells of campanula and heather are better than all the arabesques of the Vatican ; they need no improvement, arrangement, nor alteration, nothing but love, and every combination of them is different from every other, so that a painter need never repeat himself if he will only be true ; yet all these sources of power have been of late entirely neglected by Fielding ; there is evidence through all his foregrounds of their being mere home inventions, and like all home inventions they exhibit perpetual resemblances and repetitions : the painter is evidently embarrassed without his rutted road in the middle, and his boggy pool at the side, which pool he has of late painted in hard lines of violent blue : there is not a stone, even of the nearest and most important, which has its real lichens upon it, or a studied form or anything more to occupy the mind than certain variations of dark and light browns. The same faults must be found with his present painting of foliage, neither the stems nor leafage being ever studied from nature ; and this is the more to be regretted, because in the earlier works of the artist there was much admirable drawing, and even yet his power is occasionally developed in his larger works, as in a Bolton Abbey on canvas, which was,—I cannot say, exhibited,—but was in the rooms of the Royal Academy in 1843.* I should have made the preceding remarks

* It appears not to be sufficiently understood by those artists who complain acrimoniously of their positions on the Academy walls, that the Academicians have in their own rooms a right to the line and the best places near it ; in their taking this position there is no abuse nor injustice ; but the Academicians should remember that with their rights they have their duties, and their duty is to determine among the works of artists not belonging to their body those which are most likely to advance public knowledge and judgment, and to give these the best places next their own ; neither would it detract from their dignity if they occasionally ceded a square even of their own territory, as they did gracefully and rightly, and, I am sorry to add, disinterestedly, to the picture of Paul de la Roche in 1844. Now the Academicians know perfectly well that the mass of portrait which encumbers their walls at half height is worse than useless, seriously harmful to the public taste, and it was highly criminal (I use the word advisedly) that the valuable and interesting work of Fielding, of which I have above spoken, should have been placed where it was, above three rows of eye-glasses and waistcoats. A very beautiful work of Harding's was treated either in the same or the following exhibition with still greater injustice. Fielding's was

with more hesitation and diffidence, but that, from a comparison of works of this kind with the slighter ornaments of the water-color rooms, it seems evident that the painter is not unaware of the deficiencies of these latter, and concedes something of what he would himself desire to what he has found to be the feeling of a majority of his admirers. This is a dangerous modesty, and especially so in these days when the judgment of the many is palpably as artificial as their feeling is cold.

There is much that is instructive and deserving of high praise in the sketches of De Wint. Yet it is to be remembered that even the pursuit of truth, however determined, will have results limited and imperfect when its chief motive is the pride of being true; and I fear that these works, sublime as many of them have unquestionably been, testify more accuracy of eye and experience of color than exercise of thought. Their truth of effect is often purchased at too great an expense by the loss of all beauty of form, and of the higher refinements of color; deficiencies, however, on which I shall not insist, since the value of the sketches, as far as they go, is great; they have done good service and set good example, and whatever their failings may be, there is evidence in them that the painter has always done what he believed to be right.

The influence of the masters of whom we have hitherto spoken is confined to those who have access to their actual works, since the particular qualities in which they excel, are in no wise to be rendered by the engraver. Those of whom we have next to speak are known to the public in a great measure by the help of the engraver; and while their influence is thus very far extended, their modes of working are perhaps, in some degree modified by the habitual reference to the future translation into light and shade; refer-

merely put out of sight; Harding's where its faults were conspicuous and its virtues lost. It was an Alpine scene, of which the foreground, rocks, and torrents were painted with unrivalled fidelity and precision; the foliage was dexterous, the aerial gradations of the mountains tender and multitudinous, their forms carefully studied and very grand. The blemish of the picture was a buff-colored tower with a red roof; singularly meagre in detail, and conventionally relieved from a mass of gloom. The picture was placed where nothing but this tower could be seen.

ence which is indeed beneficial in the care it induces respecting the arrangement of the chiaroscuro and the explanation of the forms, but which is harmful, so far as it involves a dependence rather on quantity of picturesque material than on substantial color or simple treatment, and as it admits of indolent diminution of size and slightness of execution.

We should not be just to the present works of J. D. Harding unless we took this influence into account. Some years back none of our artists realized more laboriously, nor obtained more substantial color and texture ; a large drawing in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham, is of great value as an example of his manner at the period ; a manner not only careful, but earnest, and free from any kind of affectation. Partly from the habit of making slight and small drawings for engravers, and partly also, I imagine, from an overstrained seeking after appearances of dexterity in execution, his drawings have of late years become both less solid and less complete ; not, however, without attaining certain brilliant qualities in exchange which are very valuable in the treatment of some of the looser portions of subject. Of the extended knowledge and various powers of this painter, frequent instances are noted in the following pages. Neither, perhaps, are rightly estimated among artists, owing to a certain coldness of sentiment in his choice of subject, and a continual preference of the picturesque to the impressive ; proved perhaps in nothing so distinctly as in the little interest usually attached to his skies, which, if aerial and expressive of space and movement, content him, though destitute of story, power, or character : an exception must be made in favor of the very grand sunrise on the Swiss Alps, exhibited in 1844, wherein the artist's real power was in some measure displayed, though I am convinced he is still capable of doing far greater things. So in his foliage he is apt to sacrifice the dignity of his trees to their wildness, and lose the forest in the copse, neither is he at all accurate enough in his expression of species or realization of near portions. These are deficiencies, be it observed, of sentiment, not of perception, as there are few who equal him in rapidity of seizure of material truth.

Very extensive influence in modern art must be attributed to the works of Samuel Prout ; and as there are some cir-

cumstances belonging to his treatment of architectural subject which it does not come within the sphere of the following chapters to examine, I shall endeavor to note the more important of them here.

§ 25. Samuel Prout. Early painting of architecture, how deficient.

Let us glance back for a moment to the architectural drawing of earlier times. Before the time of the Bellinis at Venice, and of Ghirlandajo at Florence, I believe there are no examples of anything beyond conventional representation of architecture, often rich, quaint, and full of interest, as Memmi's abstract of the Duomo at Florence at S^{ta}. Maria Novella ; but not to be classed with any genuine efforts at representation. It is much to be regretted that the power and custom of introducing well-drawn architecture should have taken place only when architectural taste had been itself corrupted, and that the architecture introduced by Bellini, Ghirlandajo, Francia, and the other patient and powerful workmen of the fifteenth century, is exclusively of the renaissance styles ; while their drawing of it furnishes little that is of much interest to the architectural draughtsman as such, being always governed by a reference to its subordinate position, so that all forceful shadow and play of color are (most justly) surrendered for quiet and uniform hues of gray and chiaroscuro of extreme simplicity. Whatever they chose to do they did with consummate grandeur, (note especially the chiaroscuro of the square window of Ghirlandajo's, which so much delighted Vasari in S^{ta}. Maria Novella ; and the daring management of a piece of the perspective in the Salutation, opposite where he has painted a flight of stairs descending in front, though the picture is twelve feet above the eye) ; and yet this grandeur, in all these men, results rather from the general power obtained in their drawing of the figure than from any definite knowledge respecting the things introduced in these accessory parts ; so that while in some points it is impossible for any painter to equal these accessories, unless he were in all respects as great as Ghirlandajo or Bellini, in others it is possible for him, with far inferior powers, to attain a representation both more accurate and more interesting.

In order to arrive at the knowledge of these, we must briefly take note of a few of the modes in which architecture

itself is agreeable to the mind, especially of the influence upon the character of the building which is to be attributed to the signs of age.

§ 26. Effects of age upon buildings, how far desirable.

It is evident, first, that if the design of the building be originally bad, the only virtue it can ever possess will be in signs of antiquity. All that in this world enlarges the sphere of affection or imagination is to be revered, and all those circumstances enlarge it which strengthen our memory or quicken our conception of the dead ; hence it is no light sin to destroy anything that is old, more especially because, even with the aid of all obtainable records of the past, we, the living, occupy a space of too large importance and interest in our own eyes ; we look upon the world too much as our own, too much as if we had possessed it and should possess it forever, and forget that it is a mere hostelry, of which we occupy the apartments for a time, which others better than we have sojourned in before, who are now where we should desire to be with them. Fortunately for mankind, as some counterbalance to that wretched love of novelty which originates in selfishness, shallowness, and conceit, and which especially characterizes all vulgar minds, there is set in the deeper places of the heart such affection for the signs of age that the eye is delighted even by injuries which are the work of time ; not but that there is also real and absolute beauty in the forms and colors so obtained, for which the original lines of the architecture, unless they have been very grand indeed, are well exchanged, so that there is hardly any building so ugly but that it may be made an agreeable object by such appearances. It would not be easy, for instance, to find a less pleasing piece of architecture than the portion of the front of Queen's College, Oxford, which has just been restored ; yet I believe that few persons could have looked with total indifference on the mouldering and peeled surface of the oolite limestone previous to its restoration. If, however, the character of the building consist in minute detail or multitudinous lines, the evil or good effect of age upon it must depend in great measure on the kind of art, the material, and the climate. The Parthenon, for instance, would be injured by any markings which interfered with the contours of its sculptures ; and any lines of extreme purity, or colors of original har-

mony and perfection are liable to injury, and are ill exchanged for mouldering edges or brown weatherstains.

But as all architecture is, or ought to be, meant to be durable, and to derive part of its glory from its antiquity, all art that is liable to mortal injury from effects of time is therein out of place, and this is another reason for the principle I have asserted in the second part, page 204. I do not at this instant recollect a single instance of any very fine building which is not improved up to a certain period by all its signs of age, after which period, like all other human works, it necessarily declines, its decline being in almost all ages and countries accelerated by neglect and abuse in its time of beauty, and alteration or restoration in its time of age.

Thus I conceive that all buildings dependent on color, whether of mosaic or painting, have their effect improved by the richness of the subsequent tones of age; for there are few arrangements of color so perfect but that they are capable of improvement by some softening and blending of this kind: with mosaic, the improvement may be considered as proceeding almost so long as the design can be distinctly seen; with painting, so long as the colors do not change or chip off.

Again, upon all forms of sculptural ornament, the effect of time is such, that if the design be poor, it will enrich it; if overcharged, simplify it; if harsh and violent, soften it; if smooth and obscure, exhibit it; whatever faults it may have are rapidly disguised, whatever virtue it has still shines and steals out in the mellow light; and this to such an extent, that the artist is always liable to be tempted to the drawing of details in old buildings as of extreme beauty, which look cold and hard in their architectural lines; and I have never yet seen any restoration or cleaned portion of a building whose effect was not inferior to the weathered parts, even to those of which the design had in some parts almost disappeared. On the front of the church of San Michele at Lucca, the mosaics have fallen out of half the columns, and lie in weedy ruin beneath; in many, the frost has torn large masses of the entire coating away, leaving a scarred unsightly surface. Two of the shafts of the upper star window are eaten entirely away by the sea wind, the rest have lost their proportions, the edges of the arches are hacked

into deep hollows, and cast indented shadows on the weed-grown wall. The process has gone too far, and yet I doubt not but that this building is seen to greater advantage now than when first built, always with exception of one circumstance, that the French shattered the lower wheel window, and set up in front of it an escutcheon with "Libertas" upon it, which abomination of desolation, the Lucchese have not yet had human-heartedness enough to pull down.

Putting therefore the application of architecture as an accessory out of the question, and supposing our object to be the exhibition of the most impressive qualities of the building itself, it is evidently the duty of the draughtsman to represent it under those conditions, and with that amount of age-mark upon it which may best exalt and harmonize the sources of its beauty : this is no pursuit of mere picturesqueness, it is true following out of the ideal character of the building ; nay, far greater dilapidation than this may in portions be exhibited, for there are beauties of other kinds, not otherwise attainable, brought out by advanced dilapidation ; but when the artist suffers the mere love of ruinousness to interfere with his perception of the *art* of the building, and substitutes rude fractures and blotting stains for all its fine chiselling and determined color, he has lost the end of his own art.

§ 27. **Effects of light, how necessary to the understanding of detail.** So far of aging ; next of effects of light and color. It is, I believe, hardly enough observed among architects that the same decorations are of totally different effect according to their position and the time of day. A moulding which is of value on a building facing south, where it takes deep shadows from steep sun, may be utterly ineffective if placed west or east ; and a moulding which is chaste and intelligible in shade on a north side, may be grotesque, vulgar, or confused when it takes black shadows on the south. Farther, there is a time of day in which every architectural decoration is seen to best advantage, and certain times in which its peculiar force and character are best explained ; of these niceties the architect takes little cognizance, as he must in some sort calculate on the effect of ornament at all times ; but to the artist they are of infinite importance, and especially for this reason, that there is always much detail on buildings which

cannot be drawn as such, which is too far off, or too minute, and which must consequently be set down in short-hand of some kind or another; and, as it were, an abstract, more or less philosophical, made of its general heads. Of the style of this abstract, of the lightness, confusion, and mystery necessary in it, I have spoken elsewhere; at present I insist only on the arrangement and matter of it. All good ornament and all good architecture are capable of being put into short-hand; that is, each has a perfect system of parts, principal and subordinate, of which, even when the complemental details vanish in distance, the system and anatomy yet remain visible so long as anything is visible; so that the divisions of a beautiful spire shall be known as beautiful even till their last line vanishes in blue mist, and the effect of a well-designed moulding shall be visibly disciplined, harmonious, and inventive, as long as it is seen to be a moulding at all. Now the power of the artist of marking this character depends not on his complete knowledge of the design, but on his experimental knowledge of its salient and bearing parts, and of the effects of light and shadow, by which their saliency is best told. He must therefore be prepared, according to his subject, to use light, steep or level, intense or feeble, and out of the resulting chiaroscuro select those peculiar and hinging points on which the rest are based, and by which all else that is essential may be explained.

The thoughtful command of all these circumstances constitutes the real architectural draughtsman; the habits of executing everything either under one kind of effect or in one manner, or of using unintelligible and meaningless abstracts of beautiful designs, are those which must commonly take the place of it and are the most extensively esteemed.*

Let us now proceed with our review of those artists who have devoted themselves more peculiarly to architectural subject.

§ 28. Architectural painting of Gentile Bellini and Vittor Carpaccio;

Foremost among them stand Gentile Bellini and Vittor Carpaccio, to whom we are indebted for the only existing faithful statements of the architecture of Old Venice.

* I have not given any examples in this place, because it is difficult to explain such circumstances of effect without diagrams: I purpose entering into fuller discussion of the subject with the aid of illustration.

and who are the only authorities to whom we can trust in conjecturing the former beauty of those few desecrated fragments, the last of which are now being rapidly swept away by the idiocy of modern Venetians.

Nothing can be more careful, nothing more delicately finished, or more dignified in feeling than the works of both these men ; and as architectural evidence they are the best we could have had, all the gilded parts being gilt in the picture, so that there can be no mistake or confusion of them with yellow color or light, and all the frescoes or mosaics given with the most absolute precision and fidelity. At the same time they are by no means examples of perfect architectural drawing ; there is little light and shade in them of any kind, and none whatever of the thoughtful observance of temporary effect of which we have just been speaking ; so that, in rendering the character of the relieved parts, their solidity, depth, or gloom, the representation fails altogether, and it is moreover lifeless from its very completion, both the signs of age and the effects of use and habitation being utterly rejected ; rightly so, indeed, in these instances, (all the architecture of these painters being in background to religious subject,) but wrongly so, if we look to the architecture alone. Neither is there anything like aerial perspective attempted ; the employment of actual gold in the decoration of all the distances, and the entire realization of their details, as far as is possible on the scale compelled by perspective, being alone sufficient to prevent this, except in the hands of painters far more practised in effect than either Gentile or Carpaccio. But with all these discrepancies, Gentile Bellini's church of St. Mark's is the best church of St. Mark's that has ever been painted, so far as I know ; and I believe the reconciliation of true aerial perspective and chiaroscuro with the splendor and dignity obtained by the real gilding and elaborate detail, is a problem yet to be accomplished. With the help of the Daguerreotype, and the lessons of color given by the later Venetians, we ought now to be able to accomplish it, more especially as the right use of gold has been shown us by the greatest master of effect whom Venice herself produced, Tintoret, who has employed it with infinite grace on the steps ascended by the young Madonna, in his large picture in the

church of the Madonna dell' Orto. Perugino uses it also with singular grace, often employing it for golden light on distant trees, and continually on the high light of hair, and that without losing relative distances.

The great group of Venetian painters who § 29. And of the Venetians generally. brought landscape art, for that time, to its culminating point, have left, as we have already seen, little that is instructive in architectural painting. The causes of this I cannot comprehend, for neither Titian nor Tintoret appears to despise anything that affords them either variety of form or of color, the latter especially condescending to very trivial details,—as in the magnificent carpet painting of the Doge Mocenigo ; so that it might have been expected that in the rich colors of St. Mark's, and the magnificent and fantastic masses of the Byzantine palaces, they would have found whereupon to dwell with delighted elaboration. This is, however, never the case, and although frequently compelled to introduce portions of Venetian locality in their backgrounds, such portions are always treated in a most hasty and faithless manner, missing frequently all character of the building, and never advanced to realization. In Titian's picture of Faith, the view of Venice below is laid in so rapidly and slightly, the houses all leaning this way and that, and of no color, the sea a dead gray green, and the ship-sails mere dashes of the brush, that the most obscure of Turner's Venices would look substantial beside it ; while in the very picture of Tintoret in which he has dwelt so elaborately on the carpet, he has substituted a piece of ordinary renaissance composition for St. Mark's, and in the background has chosen the Sansovino side of the Piazzetta, treating even that so carelessly as to lose all the proportion and beauty of its design, and so flimsily that the line of the distant sea which has been first laid in, is seen through all the columns. Evidences of magnificent power of course exist in whatever he touches, but his full power is never turned in this direction. More space is allowed to his architecture by Paul Veronese, but it is still entirely suggestive, and would be utterly false except as a frame or background for figures. The same may be said with respect to Raffaele and the Roman school.

If, however, these men laid architecture little under contri-

bution to their own art, they made their own art a glorious gift to architecture, and the walls of Venice, which before, I believe, had received color only in arabesque patterns, were lighted with human life by Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese. Of the works of Tintoret and Titian, nothing now, I believe, remains; two figures of Giorgione's are still traceable on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, one of which, singularly uninjured, is seen from far above and below the Rialto, flaming like the reflection of a sunset. Two figures of Veronese were also traceable till lately, the head and arms of one still remain, and some glorious olive-branches which were beside the other; the figure having been entirely effaced by an inscription in large black letters on a whitewash tablet which we owe to the somewhat inopportunist expressed enthusiasm of the inhabitants of the district in favor of their new pastor.* Judging, however, from the rate at which destruction is at present advancing, and seeing that, in about seven or eight years more, Venice will have utterly lost every external claim to interest, except that which attaches to the group of buildings immediately around St. Mark's place, and to the larger churches, it may be conjectured that the greater part of her present degradation has taken place, at any rate, within the last forty years. Let the reader with such scraps of evidence as may still be gleaned from under the stucco and paint of the Italian committees of taste, and from among the drawing-room innovations of English and German residents restore Venice in

* The inscription is to the following effect,—a pleasant thing to see upon the walls, were it but more innocently placed :—

CAMPO. DI. S. MAURIZIO

DIO

CONSERVI A NOI.

LUNGAMENTE

LO ZELANTIS. E. REVERENDIS

D. LUIGI. PICCINI.

NOSTRO

NOVELLO PIEVANO.

GLI ESULTANT.

PARROCCHIANI



CASA CONTARINI FASAN, VENICE.
From a drawing by Ruskin.

his imagination to some resemblance of what she must have been before her fall. Let him, looking from Lido or Fusina, replace in the forest of towers those of the hundred and sixty-six churches which the French threw down ; let him sheet her walls with purple and scarlet, overlay her minarets with gold,* cleanse from their pollution those choked canals which are now the drains of hovels, where they were once vestibules of palaces, and fill them with gilded barges and bannered ships ; finally, let him withdraw from this scene, already so brilliant, such sadness and stain as had been set upon it by the declining energies of more than half a century, and he will see Venice as it was seen by Canaletto ; whose miserable, virtueless, heartless mechanism, accepted as the representation of such various glory, is, both in its existence and acceptance, among the most striking signs of the lost sensation and deadened intellect of the nation at that time ; a numbness and darkness more without hope than that of the grave itself, holding and wearing yet the sceptre and the crown like the corpses of the Etruscan kings, ready to sink into ashes at the first unbarring of the door of the sepulchre.

The mannerism of Canaletto is the most degraded that I know in the whole range of art. Professing the most servile and mindless imitation, it imitates nothing but the blackness of the shadows ; it gives no one single architectural ornament, however near, so much form as might enable us even to guess at its actual one ; and this I say not rashly, for I shall prove it by placing portions of detail accurately copied from Canaletto side by side with engravings from the Daguerreotype ; it gives the buildings neither their architectural beauty nor their ancestral dignity, for there is no texture of stone nor character of age in Canaletto's touch ; which is invariably a violent, black, sharp, ruled penmanlike line, as far removed from the grace of nature as from her faintness and transparency ; and for his truth of

* The quantity of gold with which the decorations of Venice were once covered could not now be traced or credited without reference to the authority of Gentile Bellini. The greater part of the marble mouldings have been touched with it in lines and points, the minarets of St. Mark's, and all the florid carving of the arches entirely sheeted. The Casa d'Oro retained it on its lions until the recent commencement of its Restoration.

color, let the single fact of his having omitted *all record, whatsoever, of the frescoes* whose wrecks are still to be found at least on one half of the unrestored palaces, and, with still less excusableness, all record of the magnificent colored marbles of many whose greens and purples are still undimmed upon the Casa Dario, Casa Bianca Capello, and multitudes besides, speak for him in this respect.

Let it be observed that I find no fault with Canaletto, for his want of poetry, of feeling, of artistical thoughtfulness in treatment, or of the various other virtues which he does not so much as profess. He professes nothing but colored Daguerreotypism. Let us have it : most precious and to be revered it would be : let us have fresco where fresco was, and that copied faithfully ; let us have carving where carving is, and that architecturally true. I have seen Daguerreotypes in which every figure and rosette, and crack and stain, and fissure are given on a scale of an inch to Canaletto's three feet. What excuse is there to be offered for his omitting, on that scale, as I shall hereafter show, all statement of such ornament whatever ? Among the Flemish schools, exquisite imitations of architecture are found constantly, and that not with Canaletto's vulgar, black exaggeration of shadow, but in the most pure and silvery and luminous grays. I have little pleasure in such pictures ; but I blame not those who have more ; they are what they profess to be, and they are wonderful and instructive, and often graceful, and even affecting, but Canaletto possesses no virtue except that of dexterous imitation of commonplace light and shade, and perhaps, with the exception of Salvator, no artist has ever fettered his unfortunate admirers more securely from all healthy or vigorous perception of truth, or been of more general detriment to all subsequent schools.

§ 31. Expression
of the effects of
age on architec-
ture by S. Prout.

Neither, however, by the Flemings, nor by any other of the elder schools, was the effect of age or of human life upon architecture ever adequately expressed. What ruins they drew looked as if broken down on purpose, what weeds they put on seemed put on for ornament. Their domestic buildings had never any domesticity, the people looked out of their windows evidently to be drawn, or came into the street only to stand there forever. A peculiar studious-

ness infected all accident ; bricks fell out methodically, windows opened and shut by rule ; stones were chipped at regular intervals ; everything that happened seemed to have been expected before ; and above all, the street had been washed and the houses dusted expressly to be painted in their best. We owe to Prout, I believe, the first perception, and certainly the only existing expression of precisely the characters which were wanting to old art, of that feeling which results from the influence among the noble lines of architecture, of the rent and the rust, the fissure, the lichen, and the weed, and from the writing upon the pages of ancient walls of the confused hieroglyphics of human history. I suppose, from the deserved popularity of the artist, that the strange pleasure which I find myself in the deciphering of these is common to many ; the feeling has been rashly and thoughtlessly condemned as mere love of the picturesque ; there is, as I have above shown, a deeper moral in it, and we owe much, I am not prepared to say how much, to the artist by whom pre-eminently it has been excited. For, numerous as have been his imitators, extended as his influence, and simple as his means and manner, there has yet appeared nothing at all to equal him ; there is *no* stone drawing, *no* vitality of architecture like Prout's. I say not this rashly, I have Mackenzie in my eye and many other capital imitators ; and I have carefully reviewed the Architectural work of the Academicians, often most accurate and elaborate. I repeat, there is nothing but the work of Prout which is true, living, or right in its general impression, and nothing, therefore, so inexhaustibly agreeable. Faults he has, manifold, easily detected, and much declaimed against by second-rate artists ; but his excellence no one has ever touched, and his lithographic work, (Sketches in Flanders and Germany,) which was, I believe, the first of the kind, still remains the most valuable of all, numerous and elaborate as its various successors have been. The second series (in Italy and Switzerland) was of less value, the drawings seemed more laborious, and had less of the life of the original sketches, being also for the most part of subjects less adapted for the development of the artist's peculiar powers ; but both are fine, and the Brussels, Louvain, Cologne, and Nuremberg, subjects of the one, together with the Tours, Amboise, Geneva, and Sion of

the other, exhibit substantial qualities of stone and wood drawing, together with an ideal appreciation of the present active vital being of the cities, such as nothing else has ever approached. Their value is much increased by the circumstance of their being drawn by the artist's own hand upon the stone, and by the consequent manly recklessness of subordinate parts, (in works of this kind, be it remembered, much *is* subordinate,) which is of all characters of execution the most refreshing. Note the scrawled middle tint of the wall behind the Gothic well at Ratisbonne, and compare this manly piece of work with the wretched smoothness of recent lithography. Let it not be thought that there is any inconsistency between what I say here and what I have said respecting finish. This piece of dead wall is as much finished in relation to its *function* as a wall of Ghirlandajo's or Leonardo's in relation to theirs, and the refreshing quality is the same in both, and manifest in *all* great masters, without exception, that of the utter regardlessness of the means so that their end be reached. The same kind of scrawling occurs often in the shade of Raffaele.

It is not only, however, by his peculiar stone touch nor perception of human character that he is distinguished. He is the most dexterous of all our artists in a certain kind of composition. No one can place figures like him, except Turner. It is one thing to know where a piece of blue or white is wanted, and another to make the wearer of the blue apron or white cap come there, and not look as if it were against her will. Prout's streets are the only streets that are accidentally crowded, his markets are the only markets where one feels inclined to get out of the way. With others we feel the figures so right where they are, that we have no expectation of their going anywhere else, and approve of the position of the man with the wheelbarrow, without the slightest fear of his running against our legs. One other merit he has, far less generally acknowledged than it should be: he is among our most sunny and substantial colorists. Much conventional color occurs in his inferior pictures (for he is very unequal and some in all; but portions are always to be found of quality so luminous and pure that I have found these works the only ones capable of bearing juxtaposition with Turner and

§ 32. His excellent composition and color.

Hunt, who invariably destroy everything else that comes within range of them. His most beautiful tones occur in those drawings in which there is prevalent and powerful warm gray, his most failing ones in those of sandy red. On his deficiencies I shall not insist, because I am not prepared to say how far it is possible for him to avoid them. We have never seen the reconciliation of the peculiar characters he has obtained with the accurate following out of architectural detail. With his present modes of execution, farther fidelity is impossible, nor has any other mode of execution yet obtained the same results; and though much is unaccomplished by him in certain subjects, and something of over-mannerism may be traced in his treatment of others, as especially in his mode of expressing the decorative parts of Greek or Roman architecture, yet in his own peculiar Gothic territory, where the spirit of the subject itself is somewhat rude and grotesque, his abstract of decoration has more of the spirit of the reality than far more laborious imitation. The spirit of the Flemish Hotel de Ville and decorated street architecture has never been even in the slightest degree felt or conveyed except by him, and by him, to my mind, faultlessly and absolutely; and though his interpretation of architecture that contains more refined art in its details is far less satisfactory, still it is impossible, while walking on his favorite angle of the Piazzetta at Venice, either to think of any other artist than Prout or *not* to think of *him*.

Many other dexterous and agreeable architectural artists have of various degrees of merit, but of all of whom, it may be generally said, that they draw hats, faces, cloaks, and caps much better than Prout, but figures not so well; that they draw walls and windows but not cities, mouldings and buttresses but not cathedrals. Joseph Nash's work on the architecture of the middle ages is, however, valuable, and I suppose that Haghe's works may be depended on for fidelity. But it appears very strange that a workman capable of producing the clever drawings he has, from time to time, sent to the New Society of Painters in Water Colors, should publish lithographs so conventional, forced, and lifeless.

It is not without hesitation, that I mention a name respect-

§ 33. Modern architectural painting generally. G. Cattermole.

ing which the reader may already have been surprised at my silence, that of G. Cattermole. There are signs in his works of very peculiar gifts, and perhaps also of powerful genius; their deficiencies I should willingly attribute to the advice of ill-judging friends, and to the applause of a public satisfied with shallow efforts, if brilliant; yet I cannot but think it one necessary characteristic of all true genius to be misled by no such false fires. The Antiquarian feeling of Cattermole is pure, earnest, and natural; and I think his imagination originally vigorous, certainly his fancy, his grasp of momentary passion considerable, his sense of action in the human body vivid and ready. But no original talent, however brilliant, can sustain its energy when the demands upon it are constant, and all legitimate support and food withdrawn. I do not recollect in any, even of the most important of Cattermole's works, so much as a fold of drapery studied out from nature. Violent conventionalism of light and shade, sketchy forms continually less and less developed, the walls and the faces drawn with the same stucco color, alike opaque, and all the shades on flesh, dress, or stone, laid in with the same arbitrary brown, forever tell the same tale of a mind wasting its strength and substance in the production of emptiness, and seeking, by more and more blindly hazarded handling, to conceal the weakness which the attempt at finish would betray.

This tendency of late, has been painfully visible in his architecture. Some drawings made several years ago for an annual illustrative of Scott's works were for the most part pure and finely felt—(though irrelevant to our present subject, a fall of the Clyde should be noticed, admirable for breadth and grace of foliage, and for the bold sweeping of the water, and another subject of which I regret that I can only judge by the engraving; Glendearg at twilight—the monk Eustace chased by Christie of the Clint hill—which I think must have been one of the sweetest pieces of simple Border hill feeling ever painted)—and about that time his architecture, though always conventionally brown in the shadows, was generally well drawn, and always powerfully conceived.

Since then, he has been tending gradually through exaggeration to caricature, and vainly endeavoring to attain by inordi

nate bulk of decorated parts, that dignity which is only to be reached by purity of proportion and majesty of line.

It has pained me deeply, to see an artist of so great original power indulging in childish fantasticism and exaggeration, and substituting for the serious and subdued work of legitimate imagination, monstre machicolations and colossal cusps and crockets. While there is so much beautiful architecture daily in process of destruction

§ 34. The evil in an archæological point of view of misapplied invention in architectural subject.

around us, I cannot but think it treason to *imagine* anything ; at least, if we must have composition, let the design of the artist be such as the architect would applaud. But it is surely very grievous, that while our idle artists are helping their vain inventions by the fall of sponges on soiled paper, glorious buildings with the whole intellect and history of centuries concentrated in them, are suffered to fall into unrecorded ruin. A day does not now pass in Italy without the destruction of some mighty monument ; the streets of all her cities echo to the hammer, half of her fair buildings lie in separate stones about the places of their foundation ; would not time be better spent in telling us the truth about these perishing remnants of majestic thought, than in perpetuating the ill-digested fancies of idle hours ? It is, I repeat, treason to the cause of art for any man to invent, unless he invents something better than has been invented before, or something differing in kind. There is room enough for invention in the pictorial treatment of what exists. There is no more honorable exhibition of imaginative power, than in the selection of such place, choice of such treatment, introduction of such incident, as may produce a noble picture without deviation from one line of the actual truth ; and such I believe to be, indeed, in the end the most advantageous, as well as the most modest direction of the invention, for I recollect no single instance of architectural composition by any men except such as Leonardo or Veronese, who could design their architecture thoroughly before they painted it, which has not a look of inanity and absurdity. The best landscapes and the best architectural studies have been views ; and I would have the artist take shame to himself in the exact degree in which he finds himself obliged in the production of his picture to lose any, even of the smallest parts or most trivial hues which bear a part in the

great impression made by the reality. The difference between the drawing of the architect and artist * ought never to be, as it now commonly is, the difference between lifeless formality and witless license ; it ought to be between giving the mere lines and measures of a building, and giving those lines and measures with the impression and soul of it besides. All artists should be ashamed of themselves when they find they have not the power of being true ; the right wit of drawing is like the right wit of conversation, not hyperbole, not violence, not frivolity, only well expressed, laconic truth.

Among the members of the Academy, we have at present only one professedly architectural draughtsman of note, David Roberts, whose reputation is probably farther extended on the continent than that of any other of our artists, except Landseer. I am not certain, however, that I have any reason to congratulate either of my countrymen upon this their European estimation ; for I think it exceedingly probable that in both instances it is exclusively based on their defects ; and in the case of Mr. Roberts, in particular, there has of late appeared more ground for it than is altogether desirable in a smoothness and over-finish of texture which bears dangerous fellowship with the work of our Gallic neighbors.

The fidelity of intention and honesty of system of Roberts have, however, always been meritorious ; his drawing of architecture is dependent on no unintelligible lines, or blots, or substituted types : the main lines of the real design are always there, and its hollowness and undercuttings given with exquisite feeling ; his sense of solidity of form is very peculiar, leading him to dwell with great delight on the roundings of edges and angles ; his execution is dexterous and delicate, singularly so in oil, and his sense of chiaroscuro refined. But he has never done himself justice, and suffers his pictures to fall below the rank they should assume, by the presence of several marring characters, which I shall name, because it is perfectly in his power to avoid them. In looking over the valuable series of drawing of the Holy Land, which we owe to Mr. Roberts, we cannot but be

* Indeed there should be no such difference at all. Every architect ought to be an artist ; every very great artist is necessarily an architect.

amazed to find how frequently it has happened that there was something very white immediately in the foreground, and something very black exactly behind it. The same thing happens perpetually with Mr. Roberts's pictures ; a white column is always coming out of a blue mist, or a white stone out of a green pool, or a white monument out of a brown recess, and the artifice is not always concealed with dexterity. This is unworthy of so skilful a composer, and it has destroyed the impressiveness as well as the color of some of his finest works. It shows a poverty of conception, which appears to me to arise from a deficient habit of study. It will be remembered that of the sketches for this work, several times exhibited in London, every one was executed in the same manner, and with about the same degree of completion : being all of them accurate records of the main architectural lines, the shapes of the shadows, and the remnants of artificial color, obtained, by means of the same grays, throughout, and of the same yellow (a singularly false and cold though convenient color) touched upon the lights. As far as they went, nothing could be more valuable than these sketches, and the public, glancing rapidly at their general and graceful effects, could hardly form anything like an estimate of the endurance and determination which must have been necessary in such a climate to obtain records so patient, entire, and clear, of details so multitudinous as (especially) the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian temples ; an endurance which perhaps only artists can estimate, and for which we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Roberts most difficult to discharge. But if these sketches were all that the artist brought home, whatever value is to be attached to them as statements of fact, they are altogether insufficient for the producing of pictures. I saw among them no single instance of a downright study ; of a study in which the real hues and shades of sky and earth had been honestly realized or attempted ; nor were there, on the other hand, any of those invaluable-blotted-five-minutes works which record the unity of some single and magnificent impressions. Hence the pictures which have been painted from these sketches have been as much alike in their want of impressiveness as the sketches themselves, and have never borne the living aspect of the Egyptian light ; it has always been impossible to say whether the red in them (not a pleasant

one) was meant for hot sunshine or for red sandstone—their power has been farther destroyed by the necessity the artist seems to feel himself under of eking out their effect by points of bright foreground color, and thus we have been encumbered with caftans, pipes, scymetars, and black hair, when all that we wanted was a lizard, or an ibis. It is perhaps owing to this want of earnestness in study rather than to deficiency of perception, that the coloring of this artist is commonly untrue. Some time ago when he was painting Spanish subjects, his habit was to bring out his whites in relief from transparent bituminous browns, which though not exactly right in color, were at any rate warm and agreeable; but of late his color has become cold, waxy, and opaque, and in his deep shades he sometimes permits himself the use of a violent black which is altogether unjustifiable. A picture of Roslin Chapel exhibited in 1844, showed this defect in the recess to which the stairs descend, in an extravagant degree; and another exhibited in the British Institution, instead of showing the exquisite crumbling and lichenous texture of the Roslin stone, was polished to as vapid smoothness as ever French historical picture. The general feebleness of the effect is increased by the insertion of the figures as violent pieces of local color unaffected by the light and unblended with the hues around them, and bearing evidence of having been painted from models or draperies in the dead light of a room instead of sunshine. On these deficiencies I should not have remarked, but that by honest and determined painting from and of nature, it is perfectly in the power of the artist to supply them; and it is bitterly to be regretted that the accuracy and elegance of his work should not be aided by that genuineness of hue and effect which can only be given by the uncompromising effort to paint not a fine picture but an impressive and known *verity*.

The two artists whose works it remains for us to review, are men who have presented us with examples of the treatment of every kind of subject, and among the rest with portions of architecture which the best of our exclusively architectural draughtsmen could not excel.

The frequent references made to the works of Clarkson Stanfield throughout the subsequent pages render it less necessary for

me to speak of him here at any length. He is the leader of the English Realists, and perhaps among the more remarkable of his characteristics is the look of common-sense and rationality which his compositions will always bear when opposed to any kind of affectation. He appears to think of no other artist. What he has learned, has been from his own acquaintance with and affection for the steep hills and the deep sea; and his modes of treatment are alike removed from sketchiness or incompleteness, and from exaggeration or effort. The somewhat over-prosaic tone of his subjects is rather a condescension to what he supposes to be public feeling, than a sign of want of feeling in himself; for in some of his sketches from nature or from fancy, I have seen powers and perceptions manifested of a far higher order than any that are traceable in his Academy works, powers which I think him much to be blamed for checking. The portion of his pictures usually most defective in this respect is the sky, which is apt to be cold and uninventive, always well drawn, but with a kind of hesitation in the clouds whether it is to be fair or foul weather; they having neither the joyfulness of rest, nor the majesty of storm. Their color is apt also to verge on a morbid purple, as was eminently the case in the large picture of the wreck on the coast of Holland exhibited in 1844, a work in which both his powers and faults were prominently manifested, the picture being full of good painting, but wanting in its entire appeal. There was no feeling of wreck about it; and, but for the damage about her bowsprit, it would have been impossible for a landsman to say whether the hull was meant for a wreck or a guardship. Nevertheless, it is always to be recollected, that in subjects of this kind it is probable that much escapes us in consequence of our want of knowledge, and that to the eye of the seaman much may be of interest and value which to us appears cold. At all events, this healthy and rational regard of things is incomparably preferable to the dramatic absurdities which weaker artists commit in matters marine; and from copper-colored sunsets on green waves sixty feet high, with cauliflower breakers, and ninepin rocks; from drowning on planks, and starving on rafts, and lying naked on beaches, it is really refreshing to turn to a surge of Stanfield's true salt,

§ 36. Clarkson
Stanfield.

serviceable, unsentimental sea. It would be well, however, if he would sometimes take a higher flight. The castle of Ischia gave him a grand subject, and a little more invention in the sky, a little less muddiness in the rocks, and a little more savageness in the sea, would have made it an impressive picture; it just misses the sublime, yet is a fine work, and better engraved than usual by the Art Union.

One fault we cannot but venture to find, even in our own extreme ignorance, with Mr. Stanfield's boats; they never look weather-beaten. There is something peculiarly precious in the rusty, dusty, tar-trickled, fishy, phosphorescent brown of an old boat, and when this has just dipped under a wave and rises to the sunshine it is enough to drive Giorgione to despair. I have never seen any effort at this by Stanfield; his boats always look new painted and clean; witness especially the one before the ship in the wreck picture above noticed; and there is some such absence of a right sense of color in other portions of his subject; even his fishermen have always clean jackets and unsoiled caps, and his very rocks are lichenless. And, by the way, this ought to be noted respecting modern painters in general, that they have not a proper sense of the value of dirt; cottage children never appear but in fresh got-up caps and aprons, and white-handed beggars excite compassion in unexceptionable rags. In reality, almost all the colors of things associated with human life derive something of their expression and value from the tones of impurity, and so enhance the value of the entirely pure tints of nature herself. Of Stanfield's rock and mountain drawing enough will be said hereafter. His foliage is inferior; his architecture admirably drawn, but commonly wanting in color. His picture of the Doge's palace at Venice was quite clay-cold and untrue. Of late he has shown a marvellous predilection for the realization, even to actually relieved texture, of old worm-eaten wood; we trust he will not allow such fancies to carry him too far.

The name I have last to mention is that of J. M. W. Turner. I do not intend to speak of this artist at present in general terms, because my constant practice throughout this work is to say, when I speak of an artist at all, the very truth of what I believe and feel respecting him; and the truth of what I believe

and feel respecting Turner would appear in this place, unsupported by any proof, mere rhapsody. I shall therefore here con-

§ 37. J. M. W.
Turner. Force
of national feel-
ing in all great
painters.

fine myself to a rapid glance at the relations of his past and present works, and to some notice of what he has failed of accomplishing: the greater part of the subsequent chapters will be exclusively de-

voted to the examination of the new fields over which he has extended the range of landscape art.

It is a fact more universally acknowledged than enforced or acted upon, that all great painters, of whatever school, have been great only in their rendering of what they had seen and felt from early childhood; and that the greatest among them have been the most frank in acknowledging this their inability to treat anything successfully but that with which they had been familiar. The Madonna of Raffaello was born on the Urbino mountains, Ghirlandajo's is a Florentine, Bellini's a Venetian; there is not the slightest effort on the part of any one of these great men to paint her as a Jewess. It is not the place here to insist farther on a point so simple and so universally demonstrable. Expression, character, types of countenance, costume, color, and accessories are with all great painters whatsoever those of their native land, and that frankly and entirely, without the slightest attempt at modification; and I assert fearlessly that it is impossible that it should ever be otherwise, and that no man ever painted or ever will paint well anything but what he has early and long seen, early and long felt, and early and long loved. How far it is possible for the mind of one nation or generation to be healthily modified and taught by the work of another, I presume not to determine; but it depends upon whether the energy of the mind which receives the instruction be sufficient, while it takes out of what it feeds upon that which is universal and common to all nature, to resist all warping from national or temporary peculiarities. Nino Pisano got nothing but good, the modern French nothing but evil, from the study of the antique; but Nino Pisano had a God and a character. All artists who have attempted to assume, or in their weakness have been affected by, the national peculiarities of other times and countries, have instantly, whatever their original power, fallen to third-rate rank, or fallen altogether,

and have invariably lost their birthright and blessing, lost their power over the human heart, lost all capability of teaching or benefiting others. Compare the hybrid classification of Wilson with the rich English purity of Gainsborough; compare the recent exhibition of middle-age cartoons for the Houses of Parliament with the works of Hogarth; compare the sickly modern German imitations of the great Italians with Albert Durer and Holbein; compare the vile classicality of Canova and the modern Italians with Mino da Fiesole, Luca della Robbia, and Andrea del Verrocchio. The manner of Nicolo Poussin is said to be Greek—it may be so: this only I know, that it is heartless and profitless. The severity of the rule, however, extends not in full force to the nationality, but only to the visibility of things; for it is very possible for an artist of powerful mind to throw himself well into the feeling of foreign nations of his own time. Thus John Lewis has been eminently successful in his seizing of Spanish character. Yet it may be doubted if the seizure be such as Spaniards themselves would acknowledge; it is probably of the habits of the people more than their hearts; continued efforts of this kind, especially if their subjects be varied, assuredly end in failure; Lewis, who seemed so eminently penetrative in Spain, sent nothing from Italy but complexions and costumes, and I expect no good from his stay in Egypt. English artists are usually entirely ruined by residence in Italy, but for this there are collateral causes which it is not here the place to examine. Be this as it may, and whatever success may be attained in pictures of slight and unpretending aim, of genre, as they are called, in the rendering of foreign character, of this I am certain, that whatever is to be truly great and affecting must have on it the strong stamp of the native land; not a law this, but a necessity, from the intense hold on their country of the affections of all truly great men: all classicality, all middle-age patent reviving, is utterly vain and absurd; if we are now to do anything great, good, awful, religious, it must be got out of our own little island, and out of this year 1846, railroads and all: if a British painter, I say this in earnest seriousness, cannot make historical characters out of the British House of Peers, he cannot paint history; and if he cannot make a Madonna of a British girl of the nineteenth century, he cannot paint one at all.

The rule, of course, holds in landscape ; yet so far less authoritatively, that the material nature of all countries and times is in many points actually, and in all, in principle, the same ; so that feelings educated in Cumberland, may find their food in Switzerland, and impressions first received among the rocks of Cornwall, be recalled upon the precipices of Genoa. Add to this actual sameness, the power of every great mind to possess itself of the spirit of things once presented to it, and it is evident, that little limitation can be set to the landscape painter as to the choice of his field ; and that the law of nationality will hold with him only so far as a certain joyfulness and completion will be by preference found in those parts of his subject which remind him of his own land. But if he attempt to impress on his landscapes any other spirit than that he has felt, and to make them landscapes of other times, it is all over with him, at least, in the degree in which such reflected moonshine takes place of the genuine light of the present day.

The reader will at once perceive how much trouble this simple principle will save both the painter and the critic ; it at once sets aside the whole school of common composition, and exonerates us from the labor of minutely examining any landscape which has nymphs or philosophers in it.

It is hardly necessary for us to illustrate this principle by any reference to the works of early landscape painters, as I suppose it is universally acknowledged with respect to them ; Titian being the most remarkable instance of the influence of the native air on a strong mind, and Claude, of that of the classical poison on a weak one ; but it is very necessary to keep it in mind in reviewing the works of our great modern landscape painter.

I do not know in what district of England Turner first or longest studied, but the scenery whose influence I can trace most definitely throughout his works, varied as they are, is that of Yorkshire. Of all his drawings, I think, those of the Yorkshire series have the most heart in them, the most affectionate, simple, unwearied, serious finishing of truth. There is in them little seeking after effect, but a strong love of place, little exhibition of the artist's own powers or peculiarities, but intense appreciation of the

§ 38. Influence of this feeling on the choice of Landscape subject.

§ 39. Its peculiar manifestation in Turner.

smallest local minutiae. These drawings have unfortunately changed hands frequently, and have been abused and ill treated by picture dealers and cleaners ; the greater number of them, are now mere wrecks. I name them not as instances, but as proofs of the artist's study in this district ; for the affection to which they owe their excellence, must have been grounded long years before. It is to be traced, not only in these drawings of the places themselves, but in the peculiar love of the painter for rounded forms of hills ; not but that he is right in this on general principles, for I doubt not, that, with his peculiar feeling for beauty of line, his hills would have been rounded still, even if he had studied first among the peaks of Cadore ; but rounded to the same extent and with the same delight in their roundness, they would not have been. It is, I believe, to those broad wooded steepes and swells of the Yorkshire downs that we in part owe the singular massiveness that prevails in Turner's mountain drawing, and gives it one of its chief elements of grandeur. Let the reader open the *Liber Studiorum*, and compare the painter's enjoyment of the lines in the Ben Arthur, with his comparative uncomfortableness among those of the aiguilles about the Mer de Glace. Great as he is, those peaks would have been touched very differently by a Savoyard as great as he.

I am in the habit of looking to the Yorkshire drawings, as indicating one of the culminating points in Turner's career. In these he attained the highest degree of what he had up to that time attempted, namely, finish and quantity of form united with expression of atmosphere, and light without color. His early drawings are singularly instructive in this definiteness and simplicity of aim. No complicated or brilliant color is ever thought of in them ; they are little more than exquisite studies in light and shade, very green blues being used for the shadows, and golden browns for the lights. The difficulty and treachery of color being thus avoided, the artist was able to bend his whole mind upon the drawing, and thus to attain such decision, delicacy, and completeness as have never in any wise been equalled, and as might serve him for a secure foundation in all after experiments. Of the quantity and precision of his details, the drawings made for Hakewill's Italy, are singular examples. The most perfect gem in execution is a little bit on the Rhine, with

reeds in the foreground, in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham ; but the Yorkshire drawings seem to be on the whole the most noble representatives of his art at this period.

About the time of their production, the artist seems to have felt that he had done either all that could be done, or all that was necessary, in that manner, and began to reach after something beyond it. The element of color begins to mingle with his work, and in the first efforts to reconcile his intense feeling for it with his careful form, several anomalies begin to be visible, and some unfortunate or uninteresting works necessarily belong to the period. The England drawings, which are very characteristic of it, are exceedingly unequal,—some, as the Oakhampton, Kilgarren, Alnwick, and Llanthony, being among his finest works ; others, as the Windsor from Eton, the Eton College, and the Bedford, showing coarseness and conventionality.

I do not know at what time the painter first went abroad, but among the earliest of the series of the *Liber Studiorum* (dates 1808, 1809,) occur the magnificent Mont St. Gothard, and

little Devil's Bridge. Now it is remarkable that after his acquaintance with this scenery, so congenial in almost all respects with the energy of his mind, and supplying him with materials of which in these two subjects, and in the Chartreuse, and several others afterwards, he showed both his entire appreciation and command, the proportion of English to foreign subjects should in the rest of the work be more than two to one ; and that those English subjects should be—many of them—of a kind peculiarly simple, and of every-day occurrence, such as the Pembury Mill, the Farm Yard Composition with the White Horse, that with the Cocks and Pigs, Hedging and Ditching, Watercress Gatherers (scene at Twickenham,) and the beautiful and solemn rustic subject called a Watermill ; and that the architectural subjects instead of being taken, as might have been expected of an artist so fond of treating effects of extended space, from some of the enormous continental masses are almost exclusively British ; Rivaulx, Holy Island, Dumblain, Dunstanborough, Chepstow, St. Catherine's, Greenwich Hospital, an English Parish Church, a Saxon Ruin, and an exquisite Reminiscence of the English Lowland Castle in the pastoral, with the brook, wooden bridge,

§ 40. The domestic subjects of the *Liber Studiorum*.

and wild duck, to all of which we have nothing foreign to oppose but three slight, ill-considered, and unsatisfactory subjects, from Basle, Lauffenbourg, and another Swiss village ; and, further, not only is the preponderance of subject British, but of affection also ; for it is strange with what fulness and completion the home subjects are treated in comparison with the greater part of the foreign ones. Compare the figures and sheep in the Hedging and Ditching, and the East Gate Winchelsea, together with the near leafage, with the puzzled foreground and inappropriate figures of the Lake of Thun ; or the cattle and road of the St. Catherine's Hill, with the foreground of the Bonneville : or the exquisite figure with the sheaf of corn, in the Watermill, with the vintages of the Grenoble subject.

In his foliage the same predilections are remarkable. Reminiscences of English willows by the brooks, and English forest glades mingle even with the heroic foliage of the *Æscus* and *Hesperie*, and the *Cephalus* ; into the pine, whether of Switzerland or the glorious Stone, he cannot enter, or enters at his peril, like *Ariel*. Those of the Valley of Chamounix are fine masses, better pines than other people's, but not a bit like pines for all that ; he feels his weakness, and tears them off the distant mountains with the mercilessness of an avalanche. The Stone pines of the two Italian compositions are fine in their arrangement, but they are very pitiful pines ; the glory of the Alpine rose he never touches ; he munches chestnuts with no relish ; never has learned to like olives ; and, by the vine, we find him in the foreground of the Grenoble Alps laid utterly and incontrovertibly on his back.

I adduce these evidences of Turner's nationality (and innumerable others might be given if need were) not as proofs of weakness but of power ; not so much as testifying want of perception in foreign lands, as strong hold on his own will ; for I am sure that no artist who has not this hold upon his own will ever get good out of any other. Keeping this principle in mind, it is instructive to observe the depth and solemnity which Turner's feeling received from the scenery of the continent, the keen appreciation up to a certain point of all that is locally characteristic, and the ready seizure for future use of all valuable material.

Of all foreign countries he has most entirely entered into the spirit of France ; partly because here he found more fellowship of scene with his own England, partly because an amount of thought which will miss of Italy or Switzerland, will fathom France ; partly because there is in the French foliage and forms of ground, much that is especially congenial with his own peculiar choice of form. To what cause it is owing I cannot tell, nor is it generally allowed or felt ; but of the fact I am certain, that for grace of stem and perfection of form in their transparent foliage, the French trees are altogether unmatched ; and their modes of grouping and massing are so perfectly and constantly beautiful that I think of all countries for educating an artist to the perception of grace, France bears the bell : and that not romantic nor mountainous France, not the Vosges, nor Auvergne, nor Provence, but lowland France, Picardy and Normandy, the valleys of the Loire and Seine, and even the district, so thoughtlessly and mindlessly abused by English travellers, as uninteresting, traversed between Calais and Dijon ; of which there is not a single valley but is full of the most lovely pictures, nor a mile from which the artist may not receive instruction ; the district immediately about Sens being perhaps the most valuable from the grandeur of its lines of poplars and the unimaginable finish and beauty of the tree forms in the two great avenues without the walls. Of this kind of beauty Turner was the first to take cognizance, and he still remains the only, but in himself the sufficient painter of French landscape. One of the most beautiful examples is the drawing of trees engraved for the Keepsake, now in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq.; the drawings made to illustrate the scenery of the Rivers of France supply instances of the most varied character.

The artist appears, until very lately, rather to have taken from Switzerland thoughts and general conceptions of size and of grand form and effect to be used in his after compositions, than to have attempted the seizing of its actual character. This was beforehand to be expected from the utter physical impossibility of rendering certain effects of Swiss scenery, and the monotony and unmanageableness of others. The Valley of Chamounix in the collection of Walter Fawkes, Esq., I have

§ 41. Turner's painting of French and Swiss landscape. The latter deficient.

never seen ; it has a high reputation ; the Hannibal passing the Alps in its present state exhibits nothing but a heavy shower and a crowd of people getting wet ; another picture in the artist's gallery of a land-fall is most masterly and interesting, but more daring than agreeable. The Snow-storm, avalanche, and inundation, is one of his mightiest works, but the amount of mountain drawing in it is less than of cloud and effect ; the subjects in the *Liber Studiorum* are on the whole the most intensely felt, and next to them the vignettes to Rogers's *Poems* and *Italy*. Of some recent drawings of Swiss subject I shall speak presently.

The effect of Italy upon his mind is very puzzling. On the one hand, it gave him the solemnity and power which are manifested in the historical compositions of the *Liber Studiorum*,

§ 42. His rendering of Italian character still less successful. His large compositions how failing.

more especially the *Rizpah*, the *Cephalus*, the scene from the *Fairy Queen*, and the *Æsacus* and *Hesperie* : on the other, he seems never to have entered thoroughly into the spirit of Italy, and the materials he obtained there were afterwards but awkwardly introduced in his large compositions.

Of these there are very few at all worthy of him ; none but the *Liber Studiorum* subjects are thoroughly great, and these are great because there is in them the seriousness without the materials of other countries and times. There is nothing particularly indicative of Palestine in the *Barley Harvest* of the *Rizpah*, nor in those round and awful trees ; only the solemnity of the south in the lifting of the near burning moon. The rocks of the *Jason* may be seen in any quarry of Warwickshire sandstone. *Jason* himself has not a bit of Greek about him—he is a simple warrior of no period in particular, nay, I think there is something of the nineteenth century about his legs. When local character of this classical kind is attempted, the painter is visibly cramped : awkward resemblances to *Claude* testify the want of his usual forceful originality : in the tenth *Plague of Egypt*, he makes us think of *Belzoni* rather than of *Moses* ; the fifth is a total failure, the pyramids look like brick-kilns, and the fire running along the ground bears brotherly resemblance to the burning of manure. The realization of the tenth plague now in his gallery is finer than the study, but still uninteresting ; and of the large compositions which have much of Italy in them,

the greater part are overwhelmed with quantity and deficient in emotion. The Crossing the Brook is one of the best of these hybrid pictures ; incomparable in its tree drawing, it yet leaves us doubtful where we are to look and what we are to feel ; it is northern in its color, southern in its foliage, Italy in its details, and England in its sensations, without the grandeur of the one, or the healthiness of the other.

The two Carthages are mere rationalizations of Claude, one of them excessively bad in color, the other a grand thought, and yet one of the kind which does no one any good, because everything in it is reciprocally sacrificed ; the foliage is sacrificed to the architecture, the architecture to the water, the water is neither sea, nor river, nor lake, nor brook, nor canal, and savors of Regent's Park ; the foreground is uncomfortable ground,—let on building leases. So the Caligula's Bridge, Temple of Jupiter, Departure of Regulus, Ancient Italy, Cicero's Villa, and such others, come they from whose hand they may, I class under the general head of " nonsense pictures." There never can be any wholesome feeling developed in these preposterous accumulations, and where the artist's feeling fails, his art follows ; so that the worst possible examples of Turner's color are found in pictures of this class ; in one or two instances he has broken through the conventional rules, and then is always fine, as in the Hero and Leander ; but in general the picture rises in value as it approaches to a view, as the Fountain of Fallacy, a piece of rich northern Italy, with some fairy waterworks ; this picture was unrivalled in color once, but is now a mere wreck. So the Rape of Proserpine, though it is singular that in his Academy pictures even his simplicity fails of reaching ideality ; in this picture of Proserpine the nature is not the grand nature of all time, it is indubitably modern,* and we are perfectly electrified at anybody's being carried away in the corner except

* This passage seems at variance with what has been said of the necessity of painting present times and objects. It is not so. A great painter makes out of that which he finds before him something which is independent of *all* time. He can only do this out of the materials ready to his hand, but that which he builds has the dignity of dateless age. A little painter is annihilated by an anachronism, and is conventionally antique and involuntarily modern.

by people with spiky hats and carabines. This is traceable to several causes ; partly to the want of any grand specific form, partly to the too evident middle-age character of the ruins crowning the hills, and to a multiplicity of minor causes which we cannot at present enter into.

Neither in his actual views of Italy has Turner ever caught her true spirit, except in the little vignettes to Rogers's Poems. The Villa of Galileo, the nameless composition with stone pines, the several villa moonlights, and the convent compositions in the Voyage of Columbus, are altogether exquisite ; but this is owing chiefly to their simplicity and perhaps in some measure to their smallness of size. None of his large pictures at all equal them ; the Bay of Baiae is encumbered with material, it contains ten times as much as is necessary to a good picture, and yet is so crude in color as to look unfinished. The Palestrina is full of raw white, and has a look of Hampton Court about its long avenue : the modern Italy is purely English in its near foliage ; it is composed from Tivoli material enriched and arranged most dexterously, but it has the look of a rich arrangement, and not the virtue of the real thing. The early Tivoli, a large drawing taken from below the falls, was as little true, and still less fortunate, the trees there being altogether affected and artificial. The Florence engraved in the Keepsake is a glorious drawing, as far as regards the passage with the bridge and sunlight on the Arno, the Cascine foliage, and distant plain, and the towers of the fortress on the left ; but the details of the duomo and the city are entirely missed, and with them the majesty of the whole scene. The vines and melons of the foreground are disorderly, and its cypresses conventional ; in fact, I recollect no instance of Turner's drawing a cypress except in general terms.

The chief reason of these failures I imagine to be the effort of the artist to put joyousness and brilliancy of effect upon scenes eminently pensive, to substitute radiance for serenity of light, and to force the freedom and breadth of line which he learned to love on English downs and Highland moors, out of a country dotted by campaniles and square convents, bristled with cypresses, partitioned by walls, and gone up and down by steps.

In one of the cities of Italy he had no such difficulties to

§ 43. His views of Italy destroyed by brilliancy and redundant quantity.

encounter. At Venice he found freedom of space, brilliancy of light, variety of color, massy simplicity of general form ; and to Venice we owe many of the motives in which his highest powers of color have been displayed after that change in his system of which we must now take note.

Among the earlier paintings of Turner, the culminating period, marked by the Yorkshire series in his drawings, is distinguished by great solemnity and simplicity of subject, preva-

§ 44. Changes introduced by him in the received system of art. lent gloom in light and shade, and brown in the hue, the drawing manly but careful, the minutiae sometimes exquisitely delicate. All the finest works

of this period are, I believe, without exception, views, or quiet single thoughts. The Calder Bridge, belonging to E. Bicknell, Esq., is a most pure and beautiful example. The Ivy Bridge I imagine to be later, but its rock foreground is altogether unrivalled and remarkable for its delicacy of detail ; a butterfly is seen settled on one of the large brown stones in the midst of the torrent. Two paintings of Bonneville, in Savoy, one in the possession of Abel Allnutt, Esq., the other, and, I think, the finest, in a collection at Birmingham, show more variety of color than is usual with him at the period, and are in every respect magnificent examples. Pictures of this class are of peculiar value, for the larger compositions of the same period are all poor in color, and most of them much damaged, but the smaller works have been far finer originally, and their color seems secure. There is nothing in the range of landscape art equal to them in their way, but the full character and capacity of the painter is not in them. Grand as they are in their sobriety, they still leave much to be desired ; there is great heaviness in their shadows, the material is never thoroughly vanquished, (though this partly for a very noble reason, that the painter is always thinking of and referring to nature, and indulges in no artistical conventionalities,) and sometimes the handling appears feeble. In warmth, lightness, and transparency they have no chance against Gainsborough ; in clear skies and air tone they are alike unfortunate when they provoke comparison with Claude ; and in force and solemnity they can in no wise stand with the landscape of the Venetians.

The painter evidently felt that he had farther powers, and

pressed forward into the field where alone they could be brought into play. It was impossible for him, with all his keen and long-disciplined perceptions, not to feel that the real color of nature had never been attempted by any school; and that though conventional representations had been given by the Venetians of sunlight and twilight, by invariably rendering the whites golden and the blues green, yet of the actual, joyous, pure, roseate hues of the external world no record had ever been given. He saw also that the finish and specific grandeur of nature had been given, but her fulness, space, and mystery never; and he saw that the great landscape painters had always sunk the lower middle tints of nature in extreme shade, bringing the entire melody of color as many degrees down as their possible light was inferior to nature's; and that in so doing a gloomy principle had influenced them even in their choice of subject.

For the conventional color he substituted a pure straightforward rendering of fact, as far as was in his power; and that not of such fact as had been before even suggested, but of all that is *most* brilliant, beautiful, and inimitable; he went to the cataract for its iris, to the conflagration for its flames, asked of the sea its intensest azure, of the sky its clearest gold. For the limited space and defined forms of elder landscape, he substituted the quantity and the mystery of the vastest scenes of earth; and for the subdued chiaroscuro he substituted first a balanced diminution of oppositions throughout the scale, and afterwards, in one or two instances, attempted the reverse of the old principle, taking the lowest portion of the scale truly, and merging the upper part in high light.

Innovations so daring and so various could not be introduced without corresponding peril: the difficulties that lay in his way were more than any human intellect could altogether surmount.

§ 45. Difficulties of his later manner. Resultant deficiencies. In his time there has been no one system of color generally approved; every artist has his own method and his own vehicle; how to do what Gainsborough did, we know not; much less what Titian; to invent a new system of color can hardly be expected of those who cannot recover the old. To obtain perfectly satisfactory results in color under the new conditions introduced by Turner, would at least have required the exertion of all his energies in that sole

direction. But color has always been only his second object. The effects of space and form, in which he delights, often require the employment of means and method totally at variance with those necessary for the obtaining of pure color. It is physically impossible, for instance, rightly to draw certain forms of the upper clouds with the brush ; nothing will do it but the pallet knife with loaded white after the blue ground is prepared. Now it is impossible that a cloud so drawn, however glazed afterwards, should have the virtue of a thin warm tint of Titian's, showing the canvas throughout. So it happens continually. Add to these difficulties, those of the peculiar subjects attempted, and to these again, all that belong to the altered system of chiaroscuro, and it is evident that we must not be surprised at finding many deficiencies or faults in such works, especially in the earlier of them, nor even suffer ourselves to be withdrawn by the pursuit of what seems censurable from our devotion to what is mighty.

Notwithstanding, in some chosen examples of pictures of this kind, I will name three : Juliet and her Nurse; the Old Temeraire, and the Slave Ship : I do not admit that there are at the time of their first appearing on the walls of the Royal Academy, any demonstrably avoidable faults. I do not deny that there may be, nay, that it is likely there are ; but there is no living artist in Europe whose judgment might safely be taken on the subject, or who could without arrogance affirm of any part of such a picture, that it was *wrong* ; I am perfectly willing to allow, that the lemon yellow is not properly representative of the yellow of the sky, that the loading of the color is in many places disagreeable, that many of the details are drawn with a kind of imperfection different from what they would have in nature, and that many of the parts fail of imitation, especially to an uneducated eye. But no living authority is of weight enough to prove that the virtues of the picture could have been obtained at a less sacrifice, or that they are not worth the sacrifice ; and though it is perfectly possible that such may be the case, and that what Turner has done may hereafter in some respects be done better, I believe myself that these works are at the time of their first appearing as perfect as those of Phidias or

Leonardo ; that is to say, incapable in their way, of any improvement conceivable by human mind.

Also, it is only by comparison with such that we are authorized to affirm definite faults in any of his others, for we should have been bound to speak, at least for the present, with the same modesty respecting even his worst pictures of this class, had not his more noble efforts given us canons of criticism.

But, as was beforehand to be expected from the difficulties he grappled with, Turner is exceedingly unequal ; he appears always as a champion in the thick of fight, sometimes with his foot on his enemies' necks, sometimes staggered or struck to his knee ; once or twice altogether down. He has failed most frequently, as before noticed, in elaborate compositions, from redundant quantity ; sometimes, like most other men, from over-care, as very signally in a large and most labored drawing of Bamborough ; sometimes, unaccountably, his eye for color seeming to fail him for a time, as in a large painting of Rome from the Forum, and in the Cicero's Villa, Building of Carthage, and the picture of this year in the British Institution ; and sometimes I am sorry to say, criminally, from taking licenses which he must know to be illegitimate, or indulging in conventionalities which he does not require.

On such instances I shall not insist, for the finding fault with Turner is not, I think, either decorous in myself or like to be beneficial to the reader.* The greater number of failures took

* One point, however, it is incumbent upon me to notice, being no question of art but of material. The reader will have observed that I strictly limited the perfection of Turner's works to the time of their first appearing on the walls of the Royal Academy. It bitterly grieves me to have to do this, but the fact is indeed so. No *picture* of Turner's is seen in perfection a month after it is painted. The Walhalla cracked before it had been eight days in the Academy rooms ; the vermilions frequently lose lustre long before the exhibition is over ; and when all the colors begin to get hard a year or two after the picture is painted, a painful deadness and opacity comes over them, the whites especially becoming lifeless, and many of the warmer passages settling into a hard valueless brown, even if the paint remains perfectly firm, which is far from being always the case. I believe that in some measure these results are unavoidable, the colors being so peculiarly blended and mingled in Turner's present manner as almost to necessitate their irregular drying ; but that they are not necessary to the extent in



THE DOGANA, AND SANTA MARA DELLA SALUTE, VENICE.
From a painting by Turner.

place in the transition period, when the artist was
§ 46. Reflection of his very recent works. feeling for the new qualities, and endeavoring to reconcile them with more careful elaboration of form than was properly consistent with them. Gradually his hand became more free, his perception and grasp of the new truths more certain, and his choice of subject more adapted to the exhibition of them. But his powers did not attain their highest results till towards the year 1840, about which period they did so suddenly, and with a vigor and concentration which rendered his pictures at that time almost incomparable with those which had preceded them. The drawings of Nemi, and Oberwesel, in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., were among the first evidences of this sudden advance; only the foliage in both of these is inferior; and it is remarkable that in this phase of his art, Turner has drawn little foliage, and that little badly

which they sometimes take place, is proved by the comparative safety of some even of the more brilliant works. Thus the Old Temeraire is nearly safe in color, and quite firm; while the Juliet and her Nurse is now the ghost of what it was; the Slaver shows no cracks, though it is chilled in some of the darker passages, while the Walhalla and several of the recent Venices cracked in the Royal Academy. It is true that the damage makes no further progress after the first year or two, and that even in its altered state the picture is always valuable and records its intention; but it is bitterly to be regretted that so great a painter should not leave a single work by which—in succeeding ages he might be estimated. The fact of his using means so imperfect, together with that of his utter neglect of the pictures in his own gallery, are a phenomenon in human mind which appears to me utterly inexplicable; and both are without excuse. If the effects he desires cannot be to their full extent produced except by these treacherous means, one picture only should be painted each year as an exhibition of immediate power, and the rest should be carried out, whatever the expense of labor and time in safe materials, even at the risk of some deterioration of immediate effect. That which is greatest in him is entirely independent of means; much of what he now accomplishes illegitimately might without doubt be attained in securer modes—what cannot should without hesitation be abandoned. Fortunately the drawings appear subject to no such deterioration. Many of them are now almost destroyed, but this has been I think always through ill treatment, or has been the case only with very early works. I have myself known no instance of a drawing properly protected, and not rashly exposed to light suffering the slightest change. The great foes of Turner, as of all other great colorists especially, are the picture cleaner and the mounter.

—the great characteristic of it being its power, beauty, and majesty of color, and its abandonment of all littleness and division of thought to a single impression. In the year 1842, he made some drawings from recent sketches in Switzerland ; these, with some produced in the following years, all of Swiss subject, I consider to be, on the whole, the most characteristic and perfect works he has ever produced. The Academy pictures were far inferior to them ; but among these examples of the same power were not wanting, more especially in the smaller pictures of Venice. The Sun of Venice, going to sea ; the San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina ; and a view of Murano, with the Cemetery, were all faultless : another of Venice, seen from near Fusina, with sunlight and moonlight mixed (1844) was, I think, when I first saw it, (and it still remains little injured,) the most perfectly *beautiful* piece of color of all that I have seen produced by human hands, by any means, or at any period. Of the exhibition of 1845, I have only seen a small Venice, (still I believe in the artist's possession,) and the two whaling subjects. The Venice is a second-rate work, and the two others altogether unworthy of him.

In conclusion of our present sketch of the course of landscape art, it may be generally stated that Turner is the only painter, so far as I know, who has ever drawn the sky, (not the clear sky, which we before saw belonged exclusively to the religious schools, but the various forms and phenomena of the cloudy heavens,) all previous artists having only represented it typically or partially ; but he absolutely and universally : he is the only painter who has ever drawn a mountain, or a stone ; no other man ever having learned their organization, or possessed himself of their spirit, except in part and obscurely, (the one or two stones noted of Tintoret's, (Vol. II., Part III. Ch. 3,) are perhaps hardly enough on which to found an exception in his favor.) He is the only painter who ever drew the stem of a tree, Titian having come the nearest before him, and excelling him in the muscular development of the larger trunks, (though sometimes losing the woody strength in a serpent-like flaccidity,) but missing the grace and character of the ramifications. He is the only painter who has ever represented the surface of calm, or the force of agitated water ; who has represented the effects of space on dis-

tant objects, or who has rendered the abstract beauty of natural color. These assertions I make deliberately, after careful weighing and consideration, in no spirit of dispute, or momentary zeal ; but from strong and convinced feeling, and with the consciousness of being able to prove them.

This proof is only partially and incidentally attempted in the present portion of this work, which was originally written, as before explained, for a temporary purpose, and which, therefore, I should have gladly cancelled, but that, relating as it does only to simple matters of fact and not to those of feeling, it may still, perhaps, be of service to some readers who would be unwilling to enter into the more speculative fields with which the

§ 47. Difficulty of demonstration in such subjects.

succeeding sections are concerned. I leave, therefore, nearly as it was originally written, the following examination of the relative truthfulness of elder and of recent art ; always requesting the reader to remember, as some excuse for the inadequate execution, even of what I have here attempted, how difficult it is to express or explain, by language only, those delicate qualities of the object of sense, on the seizing of which all refined truth of representation depends. Try, for instance, to explain in language the exact qualities of the lines on which depend the whole truth and beauty of expression about the half-opened lips of Raffaele's St. Catherine. There is, indeed, nothing in landscape so ineffable as this ; but there is no part nor portion of God's works in which the delicacy appreciable by a cultivated eye, and necessary to be rendered in art, is not beyond all expression and explanation ; I cannot tell it you, if you do not see it. And thus I have been entirely unable, in the following pages, to demonstrate clearly anything of really deep and perfect truth ; nothing but what is coarse and commonplace, in matters to be judged of by the senses, is within the reach of argument. How much or how little I have done must be judged of by the reader : how much it is impossible to do I have more fully shown in the concluding section.

I shall first take into consideration those general truths, common to all the objects of nature, which are productive of what is usually called "effect," that is to say, truths of tone, general color, space, and light. I shall then investigate the truths of specific form and color, in the four great component parts of landscape—sky, earth, water, and vegetation.

SECTION II.

OF GENERAL TRUTHS.

CHAPTER I.

OF TRUTH OF TONE.

As I have already allowed, that in effects of tone, the old masters have never yet been equalled ; and as this is the first, and nearly the last, concession I shall have to make to them, I wish it at once to be thoroughly understood how far it extends.

§ 1. Meaning of the word "tone :—" First, the right relation of objects in shadow to the principal light.

I understand two things by the word "tone :—"—first, the exact relief and relation of objects against and to each other in substance and darkness, as they are nearer or more distant, and the perfect relation of the shades of all of them to the chief light of the picture, whether that be sky, water, or anything else. Secondly, the exact

§ 2. Secondly, the quality of color by which it is felt to owe part of its brightness to the hue of light upon it.

relation of the colors of the shadows to the colors of the lights, so that they may be at once felt to be merely different degrees of the same light ; and

the accurate relation among the illuminated parts themselves, with respect to the degree in which they are influenced by the color of the light itself, whether warm or cold ; so that the whole of the picture (or, where several tones are united, those parts of it which are under each,) may be felt to be in one climate, under one kind of light, and in one kind of atmosphere ; this being chiefly dependent on that peculiar and inexplicable quality of each color laid on, which makes the eye feel both what is the actual color of the object represented, and that it is raised to its apparent pitch by illumination. A very bright brown, for instance, out of sunshine, may be precisely of the same shade of color as a very dead or cold brown in sun-

shine, but it will be totally different in *quality*; and that quality by which the illuminated dead color would be felt in nature different from the unilluminated bright one, is what artists are perpetually aiming at, and connoisseurs talking nonsense about, under the name of "tone." The want of tone in pictures is caused by objects looking bright in their own positive hue, and not by illumination, and by the consequent want of sensation of the raising of their hues by light.

The first of these meanings of the word "tone" is liable to be confounded with what is commonly called "aerial perspective." But aerial perspective is the expression of space, by any means whatsoever, sharpness of edge, vividness of color, etc., assisted by greater pitch of shadow, and requires only that objects should be detached from each other, by degrees of intensity in *proportion* to their distance, without requiring that the difference between the farthest and nearest should be in positive quantity the same that nature has put. But what I have called "tone" requires that there should be the same sum of difference, as well as the same division of differences.

Now the finely toned pictures of the old masters are, in this respect, some of the notes of nature played two or three octaves below her key; the dark objects in the middle distance having precisely the same relation to the light of the sky which they have in nature, but the light being necessarily infinitely lowered, and the mass of the shadow deepened in the same degree. I have often been struck, when looking at a camera-obscuro on a dark day, with the exact resemblance the image bore to one of the finest pictures of the old masters; all the foliage coming dark against the sky, and nothing being seen in its mass but here and there the isolated light of a silvery stem or an unusually illumined cluster of leafage.

Now if this could be done consistently, and all the notes of nature given in this way an octave or two down, it would be right and necessary so to do: but be it observed, not only does nature surpass us in power of obtaining light as much as the sun surpasses white paper, but she also infinitely surpasses us in her power

§ 3. Difference between tone in its first sense and aerial perspective.

§ 4. The pictures of the old masters perfect in relation of middle tints to light.

§ 5. And consequently totally false in relation of middle tints to darkness.

of shade. Her deepest shades are void spaces from which no light whatever is reflected to the eye ; ours are black surfaces from which, paint as black as we may, a great deal of light is still reflected, and which, placed against one of nature's deep bits of gloom, would tell as distinct light. Here we are then, with white paper for our highest light, and visible illumined surface for our deepest shadow, set to run the gauntlet against nature, with the sun for her light, and vacuity for her gloom. It is evident that *she* can well afford to throw her material objects dark against the brilliant aerial tone of her sky, and yet give in those objects themselves a thousand intermediate distances and tones before she comes to black, or to anything like it—all the illumined surfaces of her objects being as distinctly and vividly brighter than her nearest and darkest shadows, as the sky is brighter than those illumined surfaces. But if we, against our poor, dull obscurity of yellow paint, instead of sky, insist on having the same relation of shade in material objects, we go down to the bottom of our scale at once ; and what in the world are we to do then ? Where are all our intermediate distances to come from ?—how are we to express the aerial relations among the parts themselves, for instance, of foliage, whose most distant boughs are already almost black ?—how are we to come up from this to the foreground, and when we have done so, how are we to express the distinction between its solid parts, already as dark as we can make them, and its vacant hollows, which nature has marked sharp and clear and black, among its lighted surfaces ? It cannot but be evident at a glance, that if to any one of the steps from one distance to another, we give the same quantity of difference in pitch of shade which nature does, we must pay for this expenditure of our means by totally missing half a dozen distances, not a whit less important or marked, and so sacrifice a multitude of truths, to obtain one. And this, accordingly was the means by which the old masters obtained their (truth ?) of tone. They chose those steps of distance which are the most conspicuous and noticeable—that for instance from sky to foliage, or from clouds to hills—and they gave these their precise pitch of difference in shade with exquisite accuracy of imitation. Their means were then exhausted, and they were obliged to leave their trees flat

masses of mere filled-up outline, and to omit the truths of space in every individual part of their picture by the thousand. But this they did not care for ; it saved them trouble ; they reached their grand end, imitative effect ; they thrust home just at the places where the common and careless eye looks for imitation, and they attained the broadest and most faithful appearance of truth of tone which art can exhibit.

But they are prodigals, and foolish prodigals, in art ; they lavish their whole means to get one truth, and leave themselves powerless when they should seize a thousand. And is it indeed

§ 6. General falsehood of such a system. worthy of being called a truth, when we have a vast history given us to relate, to the fulness of which

neither our limits nor our language are adequate, instead of giving all its parts abridged in the order of their importance, to omit or deny the greater part of them, that we may dwell with verbal fidelity on two or three? Nay, the very truth to which the rest are sacrificed is rendered falsehood by their absence, the relation of the tree to the sky is marked as an impossibility by the want of relation of its parts to each other.

Turner starts from the beginning with a totally different principle. He boldly takes pure white (and justly, for it is the sign of the most intense sunbeams) for his highest light, and lamp-black for his deepest shade ; and between

§ 7. The principle of Turner in this respect. these he makes every degree of shade indicative of

a separate degree of distance,* giving each step of approach, not the exact difference in pitch which it would have in nature, but a difference bearing the same proportion to that which his sum of possible shade bears to the sum of nature's shade ; so that an object half way between his horizon and his foreground, will be exactly in half tint of force, and every minute division of intermediate space will have just its proportionate share of the lesser sum, and no more. Hence where the old masters expressed one distance, he expresses a hundred ; and where they said furlongs, he says leagues. Which of these modes of procedure be most agreeable with truth, I think I may safely

* Of course I am not speaking here of treatment of chiaroscuro, but of that quantity of depth of shade by which, *cæteris paribus*, a near object will exceed a distant one. For the truth of the systems of Turner and the old masters, as regards chiaroscuro, vide Chapter III. of this Section, § 8

leave the reader to decide for himself. He will see in this very first instance, one proof of what we above asserted, that the deceptive imitation of nature is inconsistent with real truth; for the very means by which the old masters attained the apparent accuracy of tone which is so satisfying to the eye, compelled them to give up all idea of real relations of retirement, and to represent a few successive and marked stages of distance, like the scenes of a theatre, instead of the imperceptible, multitudinous, symmetrical retirement of nature, who is not more careful to separate her nearest bush from her farthest one, than to separate the nearest bough of that bush from the one next to it.

Take for instance, one of the finest landscapes that ancient art has produced—the work of a really great and intellectual mind, the quiet Nicholas Poussin, in our own National Gallery, with the traveller washing his feet. The first idea we receive from this picture is, that it is evening, and all the light coming from the horizon. Not so.

§ 8. Comparison
of N. Poussin's
"Phocion."

It is full moon, the light coming steep from the left, as is shown by the shadow of the stick on the right-hand pedestal,—(for if the sun were not very high, that shadow could not lose itself half way down, and if it were not lateral, the shadow would slope, instead of being vertical.) Now, ask yourself, and answer candidly, if those black masses of foliage, in which scarcely any form is seen but the outline, be a true representation of trees under noon day sunlight, sloping from the left, bringing out, as it necessarily would do, their masses into golden green, and marking every leaf and bough with sharp shadow and sparkling light. The only truth in the picture is the exact pitch of relief against the sky of both trees and hills, and to this the organization of the hills, the intricacy of the foliage, and everything indicative either of the nature of the light, or the character of the objects, are unhesitatingly sacrificed. So much falsehood does it cost to obtain two apparent truths of tone. Or take, as a still more glaring instance, No. 260 in the Dulwich Gallery, where the trunks of the trees, even of those farthest off, on the left, are as black as paint can make them, and there is not, and cannot be, the slightest increase of force, or any marking what-

soever of distance by color, or any other means, between them and the foreground.

Compare with these, Turner's treatment of his materials in the *Mercury and Argus*. He has here his light actually coming from the distance, the sun being nearly in the centre of the picture, and a violent relief of objects against it would be far more justifiable than in Poussin's case. But this dark relief is used in its full force only with the nearest *leaves* of the nearest group of foliage overhanging the foreground from the left ; and between these and the more distant members of the same group, though only three or four yards separate, distinct aerial perspective and intervening mist and light are shown ; while the large tree in the centre, though very dark, as being very near, compared with all the distance, is much diminished in intensity of shade from this nearest group of leaves, and is faint compared with all the foreground. It is true that this tree has not, in consequence, the actual pitch of shade against the sky which it would have in nature ; but it has precisely as much as it possibly can have, to leave it the same proportionate relation to the objects near at hand. And it cannot but be evident to the thoughtful reader, that whatever trickery or deception may be the result of a contrary mode of treatment, this is the only scientific or essentially truthful system, and that what it loses in tone it gains in aerial perspective.

Compare again the last vignette in Rogers's *Poems*, the "*Datur Hora Quietis*," where everything, even the darkest parts of the trees, is kept pale and full of graduation ; even the bridge where it crosses the descending stream of sunshine, rather lost in the light than relieved against it. until we come up to the foreground, and then the vigorous local black of the plough throws the whole picture into distance and sunshine. I do not know anything in art which can for a moment be set beside this drawing for united intensity of light and repose.

Observe, I am not at present speaking of the beauty or desirableness of the system of the old masters ; it may be sublime, and affecting, and ideal, and intellectual, and a great deal more ; but all I am concerned with at present is, that it

§ 9. With Turner's
"Mercury and
Argus."

§ 10. And with the
"Datur Hora
Quietis."

is not *true*; while Turner's is the closest and most studied approach to truth of which the materials of art admit.

It was not, therefore, with reference to this division of the subject that I admitted inferiority in our great modern master to Claude or Poussin, but with reference to the second and more usual meaning of the word "tone"—the exact

§ 11. The second sense of the word "tone."

relation and fitness of shadow and light, and of the hues of all objects under them; and more especially that

precious quality of each color laid on, which makes it appear a quiet color illuminated, not a bright color in shade. But I allow this inferiority only with respect to the paintings, of Turner, not to his drawings. I could select from among the

§ 12. Remarkable difference in this respect between the paintings and drawings of Turner.

works named in Chap. VI. of this section, pieces of tone absolutely faultless and perfect, from the coolest grays of wintry dawn to the intense fire of summer noon. And the difference between the

prevailing character of these and that of nearly all the paintings, (for the early oil pictures of Turner are far less perfect in tone than the most recent,) it is difficult to account for, but on the supposition that there is something in the material which modern artists in general are incapable of mastering, and which compels Turner himself to think less of tone in oil color, than of other and more important qualities. The total failures of Callcott, whose struggles after tone ended so invariably in shivering winter or brown paint, the misfortune of Landseer with his evening sky in 1842, the frigidity of Stanfield, and the earthiness and opacity which all the magnificent power and admirable science of Etty are unable entirely to conquer, are too fatal and convincing proofs of the want of knowledge of means, rather than of the absence of aim, in modern artists as a body. Yet,

§ 13. Not owing to want of power over the material.

with respect to Turner, however much the want of tone in his early paintings (the Fall of Carthage, for instance, and others painted at a time when he

was producing the most exquisite hues of light in water-color) might seem to favor such a supposition, there are passages in his recent works (such, for instance, as the sunlight along the sea, in the *Slaver*) which directly contradict it, and which prove to us that where he now errs in tone, (as in the *Cicero's Villa*,) it is less owing to want of power to reach it, than to the pursuit

of some different and nobler end. I shall therefore glance at the particular modes in which Turner manages his tone in his present Academy pictures ; the early ones must be given up at once. Place a genuine untouched Claude beside the Crossing the Brook, and the difference in value and tenderness of tone will be felt in an instant, and felt the more painfully because all the cool and transparent qualities of Claude would have been here desirable, and in their place, and appear to have been aimed at. The foreground of the Building of Carthage, and the greater part of the architecture of the Fall, are equally heavy and evidently paint, if we compare them with genuine passages of Claude's sunshine. There is a very grand and simple piece of tone in the possession of J. Allnutt, Esq., a sunset behind willows, but even this is wanting in refinement of shadow, and is crude in its extreme distance. Not so with the recent Academy pictures ; many of their passages are absolutely faultless ; all are refined and marvellous, and with the exception of the Cicero's Villa, we shall find few pictures painted within the last ten years which do not either present us with perfect tone, or with some higher beauty, to which it is necessarily sacrificed. If we glance at the requirements of nature, and her superiority of means to ours, we shall see why and how it is sacrificed.

Light, with reference to the tone it induces on objects, is either to be considered as neutral and white, bringing out local colors with fidelity ; or colored, and consequently modifying these local tints, with its own. But the power of pure white light to exhibit local color is strangely variable. The morning light of about nine or ten is usually very pure ; but the difference of its effect on different days, independently of mere brilliancy, is as inconceivable as inexplicable. Every one knows how capriciously the colors of a fine opal vary from day to day, and how rare the lights are which bring them fully out. Now the expression of the strange, penetrating, deep, neutral light, which, while it *alters* no color, brings every color up to the highest possible pitch and key of pure, harmonious intensity, is the chief attribute of finely-toned pictures by the great *colorists* as opposed to pictures of equally high tone, by masters who, careless of color, are content, like Cuyt, to lose local tints in the golden blaze of absorbing light.

§ 14. The two distinct qualities of light to be considered.

Falsehood, in this neutral tone, if it may be so called, is a matter far more of feeling than of proof, for any color is *possible* under such lights ; it is meagreness and feebleness only which

§ 15. Falsehoods by which Titian attains the appearance of quality in light.

are to be avoided ; and these are rather matters of sensation than of reasoning. But it is yet easy enough to prove by what exaggerated and false means the pictures most celebrated for this quality are endowed with their richness and solemnity of color. In the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian, it is difficult to imagine anything more magnificently impossible than the blue of the distant landscape ;—impossible, not from its vividness, but because it is not faint and aerial enough to account for its purity of color ; it is too dark and blue at the same time ; and there is indeed so total a want of atmosphere in it, that, but for the difference of form, it would be impossible to tell the mountains (intended to be ten miles off) from the robe of Ariadne close to the spectator. Yet make this blue faint, aerial, and distant—make it in the slightest degree to resemble the truth of nature's color—and all the tone of the picture, all its intensity and splendor, will vanish on the instant. So again, in the exquisite and inimitable little bit of color, the Europa in the Dulwich Gallery ; the blue of the dark promontory on the left is thoroughly absurd and impossible, and the warm tones of the clouds equally so, unless it were sunset ; but the blue especially, because it is nearer than several points of land which are equally in shadow, and yet are rendered in warm gray. But the whole value and tone of the picture would be destroyed if this blue were altered.

Now, as much of this kind of richness of tone is always given by Turner as is compatible with truth of aerial effect ; but he will not sacrifice the higher truths of his landscape to mere pitch of color as Titian does. He infinitely prefers

§ 16. Turner will not use such means.

having the power of giving extension of space, and fulness of form, to that of giving deep melodies of tone ; he feels too much the incapacity of art, with its feeble means of light, to give the abundance of nature's gradations ; and therefore it is, that taking pure white for his highest expression of light, that even pure yellow may give him one more step in the scale of shade, he becomes necessarily inferior in richness of effect to the old masters of tone, (who always used a golden highest

light,) but gains by the sacrifice a thousand more essential truths.

§ 17. But gains in essential truth by the sacrifice.

For, though we all know how much more like light, in the abstract, a finely-toned warm hue will be to the feelings than white, yet it is utterly impossible to mark the same number of gradations between such a sobered high light and the deepest shadow, which we can between this and white; and as these gradations are absolutely necessary to give the facts of form and distance, which, as we have above shown, are more important than any truths of tone,* Turner sacrifices the richness of his picture to its completeness—the manner of the statement to its matter. And not only is he right in doing this for the sake of space, but he is right also in the abstract question of color; for as we observed above (Sect. 14,) it is only the white light—the perfect unmodified group of rays—which will bring out local color perfectly; and if the picture, therefore, is to be complete in its system of color, that is, if it is to have each of the three primitives in their purity, it *must* have white for its highest light, otherwise the purity of one of them at least will be impossible. And this leads

§ 18. The second quality of light.

us to notice the second and more frequent quality of light, (which is assumed if we make our highest representation of it yellow,) the positive hue, namely, which it may itself possess, of course modifying whatever local tints it exhibits, and thereby rendering certain colors necessary, and certain colors impossible. Under the direct yellow light of a descending sun, for instance, pure white and pure blue are both impossible; because the purest whites and blues that nature could produce would be turned in some degree into gold or green by it; and when the sun is within half a degree of the horizon, if the sky be clear, a rose light supersedes the golden one, still more overwhelming in its effect on local color. I have seen the pale fresh green of spring vegetation in the gardens of Venice, on the Lido side, turned pure russet, or between that and crimson, by a vivid sunset of this kind, every particle of green color being absolutely annihilated. And so under all colored lights, (and there are few, from dawn to twilight, which are not slightly

* More important, observe, *as matters of truth or fact*. It may often chance that, as a matter of feeling, the tone is the more important of the two; but with this we have here no concern.

tinted by some accident of atmosphere,) there is a change of local color, which, when in a picture it is so exactly proportioned that we feel at once both what the local colors are in themselves, and what is the color and strength of the light upon them, gives us truth of tone.

For expression of effects of yellow sunlight, parts might be chosen out of the good pictures of Cuypp, which have never been equalled in art. But I much doubt if there be a single *bright*

§ 19. The perfection of Cuypp in this respect interfered with by numerous solecisms.

Cuypp in the world, which, taken as a whole, does not present many glaring solecisms in tone. I have not seen many fine pictures of his, which were not utterly spoiled by the vermilion dress of some principal figure, a vermilion totally unaffected and unwarmed by the golden hue of the rest of the picture; and, what is worse, with little distinction, between its own illumined and shaded parts, so that it appears altogether out of sunshine, the color of a bright vermilion in dead, cold daylight. It is possible that the original color may have gone down in all cases, or that these parts may have been villanously repainted: but I am the rather disposed to believe them genuine, because even throughout the best of his pictures there are evident recurrences of the same kind of solecism in other colors—greens for instance—as in the steep bank on the right of the largest picture in the Dulwich Gallery; and browns, as in the lying cow in the same picture, which is in most visible and painful contrast with the one standing beside it, the flank of the standing one being bathed in breathing sunshine, and the reposing one laid in with as dead, opaque, and lifeless brown as ever came raw from a novice's pallet. And again, in that marked 83, while the figures on the right are walking in the most precious light, and those just beyond them in the distance leave a furlong or two of pure visible sunbeams between us and them, the cows in the centre are entirely deprived, poor things, of both light and air. And these failing parts, though they often escape the eye when we are near the picture and able to dwell upon what is beautiful in it, yet so injure its whole effect that I question if there be many Cuypps in which vivid colors occur, which will not lose their effect, and become cold and flat at a distance of ten or twelve paces, retaining their

influence only when the eye is close enough to rest on the right parts without including the whole. Take, for instance, the large one in our National Gallery, seen from the opposite door, where the black cow appears a great deal nearer than the dogs, and the golden tones of the distance look like a sepia drawing rather than like sunshine, owing chiefly to the utter want of aerial grays indicated through them.

Now, there is no instance in the works of Turner of anything so faithful and imitative of sunshine as the best parts of Cuyp ; but at the same time, there is not a single vestige of the same kind of solecism. It is true, that in his fondness for color,

§ 20. Turner is not so perfect in parts — far more so in the whole. Turner is in the habit of allowing excessively cold fragments in his warmest pictures ; but these are

never, observe, warm colors with no light upon them, useless as contrasts while they are discords in the tone ; but they are bits of the very coolest tints, partially removed from the general influence, and exquisitely valuable as color, though, with all deference be it spoken, I think them sometimes slightly destructive of what would otherwise be perfect tone. For instance, the two blue and white stripes on the drifting flag of the Slave Ship, are, I think, the least degree too purely cool. I think both the blue and white would be impossible under such a light ; and in the same way the white parts of the dress of the Napoleon interfered by their coolness with the perfectly managed warmth of all the rest of the picture. But both these lights are reflexes, and it is nearly impossible to say what tones may be assumed even by the warmest light reflected from a cool surface ; so that we cannot actually convict these parts of falsehood, and though we should have liked the *tone* of the picture better had they been slightly warmer, we cannot but like the *color* of the picture better with them as they are ; while Cuyp's failing portions are not only evidently and demonstrably false, being in direct light, but are as disagreeable in color as false in tone, and injurious to everything near them. And the best proof of the grammatical accuracy of the tones of Turner is in the perfect and unchanging influence of all his pictures at any distance. We approach only to follow the sunshine into every cranny of the leafage, and retire only to feel it diffused over the scene, the whole picture

glowing like a sun or star at whatever distance we stand, and lighting the air between us and it ; while many even of the best pictures of Claude must be looked close into to be felt, and lose light every foot that we retire. The smallest of the three sea-ports in the National Gallery is valuable and right in tone when we are close to it ; but ten yards off, it is all brick-dust, offensively and evidently false in its whole hue.

The comparison of Turner with Cuyt and Claude may sound strange in most ears ; but this is chiefly because we are not in the habit of analyzing and dwelling upon those difficult and daring passages of the modern master which do not at first appeal to our ordinary notions of truth, owing to his habit of uniting two, three, or even more separate tones in the same composition. In this also he strictly follows nature, for wherever climate changes, tone changes, and the climate changes with every 200 feet of elevation, so that the upper clouds are always different in tone from the lower ones, these from the rest of the landscape, and in all probability, some part of the horizon from the rest. And when nature allows this in a high degree, as in her most gorgeous effects she always will, she does not herself impress at once with intensity of tone, as in the deep and quiet yellows of a July evening, but rather with the magnificence and variety of associated color, in which, if we give time and attention to it, we shall gradually find the solemnity and the depth of twenty tones instead of one. Now in Turner's power of associating cold with warm light, no one has ever approached, or even ventured into the same field with him. The old masters, content with one simple tone, sacrificed to its unity all the exquisite gradations and varied touches of relief and change by which nature unites her hours with each other. They gave the warmth of the sinking sun, overwhelming all things in its gold ; but they did not give those gray passages about the horizon where, seen through its dying light, the cool and the gloom of night gather themselves for their victory. Whether it was in them impotence or judgment, it is not for me to decide. I have only to point to the daring of Turner in this respect, as something to which art affords no matter of comparison, as that in

§ 21. The power
in Turner of
uniting a number
of tones.

which the mere attempt is, in itself, superiority. Take the evening effect with the *Temeraire*. That picture will not, at the first glance, deceive as a piece of actual sunlight; but this is because there is in it more than sunlight, because under the blazing veil of vaulted fire which lights the vessel on her last path, there is a blue, deep, desolate hollow of darkness, out of which you can hear the voice of the night wind, and the dull boom of the disturbed sea; because the cold, deadly shadows of the twilight are gathering through every sunbeam, and moment by moment as you look, you will fancy some new film and faintness of the night has risen over the vastness of the departing form.

And if, in effects of this kind, time be taken to dwell upon the individual tones, and to study the laws of their reconciliation, there will be found in the recent Academy pictures of this great artist a mass of various truth to which nothing can be brought for comparison, which stands not only unrivalled, but uncontended with, and which, when in carrying out it may be inferior to some of the picked passages of the old masters, is so through deliberate choice rather to suggest a multitude of truths than to imitate one, and through a strife with difficulties of effect of which art can afford no parallel example. Nay, in the next chapter, respecting color, we shall see farther reason for doubting the truth of Claude, Cuyp, and Poussin, in tone,—reason so palpable that if these were all that were to be contended with, I should scarcely have allowed any inferiority in Turner whatsoever;* but I allow it, not so much with reference to the deceptive imitations of sunlight, wrought out with desperate exaggerations of shade, of the professed landscape painters, as with reference to the glory of Rubens, the glow of Titian, the silver tenderness of

* We must not leave the subject of tone without alluding to the works of the late George Barrett, which afford glorious and exalted passages of light; and John Varley, who, though less truthful in his aim, was frequently deep in his feeling. Some of the sketches of De Wint are also admirable in this respect. As for our oil pictures, the less that is said about them the better. Callcott has the truest aim; but not having any eye for color, it is impossible for him to succeed in tone.

Cagliari, and perhaps more than all to the precious and pure passages of intense feeling and heavenly light, holy and undefiled, and glorious with the changeless passion of eternity, which sanctify with their shadeless peace the deep and noble conceptions of the early school of Italy,—of Fra Bartolomeo, Perugino, and the early mind of Raffaele.

CHAPTER II.

OF TRUTH OF COLOR.

THERE is, in the first room of the National Gallery, a landscape attributed to Gaspar Poussin, called sometimes Aricia, sometimes Le or La Riccia, according to the fancy of catalogue printers. Whether it can be supposed to resemble

§ 1. Observations
on the color of
G. Poussin's La
Riccia.

the ancient Aricia, now La Riccia, close to Albano, I will not take upon me to determine, seeing that most of the towns of these old masters are quite as like one place as another: but, at any rate, it is a town on a hill, wooded with two-and-thirty bushes, of very uniform size, and possessing about the same number of leaves each. These bushes are all painted in with one dull opaque brown, becoming very slightly greenish towards the lights, and discover in one place a bit of rock, which of course would in nature have been cool and gray beside the lustrous hues of foliage, and which, therefore, being moreover completely in shade, is consistently and scientifically painted of a very clear, pretty, and positive brick-red, the only thing like color in the picture. The foreground is a piece of road, which in order to make allowance for its greater nearness, for its being completely in light, and, it may be presumed, for the quantity of vegetation usually present on carriage-roads, is given in a very cool green gray, and the truth of the picture is completed by a number of dots in the sky on the right, with a stalk to them, of a sober and similar brown.

§ 2. As compared
with the actual
scene.

Not long ago, I was slowly descending this very bit of carriage-road, the first turn after you leave Albano, not a little impeded by the worthy successors of the ancient prototypes of Veiento.* It had been

* “Cæcus adulator—

Dignus Aricinos qui mendicaret ad axes,
Blandaue vexæ iactaret basia rhedæ.”

wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano and graceful darkness of its ilex grove rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber, the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep, palpitating azure, half ether and half dew. The noon-day sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and its masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it color, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life ; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sun-beam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the gray walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every glade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset ; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen,—casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound, and over all—the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

Tell me who is likest this, Poussin or Turner? Not in his most daring and dazzling efforts could Turner himself come

near it ; but you could not at the time have thought or remembered the work of any other man as having the remotest hue or resemblance of what you saw. Nor am I speaking of what is uncommon or unnatural ; there is

§ 3. Turner himself is inferior in brilliancy to nature.

no climate, no place, and scarcely an hour, in which nature does not exhibit color which no mortal effort can imitate or approach. For all our artificial pigments are, even when seen under the same circumstances, dead and lightless beside her living color ; the green of a growing leaf, the scarlet of a fresh flower, no art nor expedient can reach ; but in addition to this, nature exhibits her hues under an intensity of sunlight which trebles their brilliancy, while the painter, deprived of this splendid aid, works still with what is actually a gray shadow compared to the force of nature's color. Take a blade of grass and a scarlet flower, and place them so as to receive sunlight beside the brightest canvas that ever left Turner's easel, and the picture will be extinguished. So far from out-facing nature, he does not, as far as mere vividness of color goes, one-half reach her ;—but does he use this brilliancy of color on objects to which it does not properly belong ? Let us compare his works in this respect with a few instances from the old masters.

There is, on the left hand side of Salvator's Mercury and the Woodman in our National Gallery, something, without doubt intended for a rocky mountain, in the middle distance,

§ 4. Impossible colors of Salvator, Titian ;

near enough for all its fissures and crags to be distinctly visible, or, rather, for a great many awkward scratches of the brush over it to be visible, which, though not particularly representative either of one thing or another, are without doubt intended to be symbolical of rocks. Now no mountain in full light, and near enough for its details of crag to be seen, is without great variety of delicate color. Salvator has painted it throughout without one instant of variation ; but this, I suppose, is simplicity and generalization ;—let it pass : but what is the color ? *Pure sky blue*, without one grain of gray, or any modifying hue whatsoever ;—the same brush which had just given the bluest parts of the sky, has been more loaded at the same part of the pallet, and the whole mountain thrown in with unmitigated ultramarine. Now mountains only

can become pure blue when there is so much air between us and them that they become mere flat, dark shades, every detail being totally lost : they become blue when they become air, and not till then. Consequently this part of Salvator's painting, being of hills perfectly clear and near, with all their details visible, is, as far as color is concerned, broad, bold falsehood—the direct assertion of direct impossibility.

In the whole range of Turner's works, recent or of old date, you will not find an instance of anything near enough to have details visible, painted in sky blue. Wherever Turner gives blue, there he gives atmosphere ; it is air, not object. Blue he gives to his sea : so does nature ;—blue he gives, sapphire-deep, to his extreme distance ; so does nature ;—blue he gives to the misty shadows and hollows of his hills ; so does nature : but blue he gives *not*, where detail and illumined surface are visible ; as he comes into light and character, so he breaks into warmth and varied hue ; nor is there in one of his works, and I speak of the Academy pictures especially, one touch of cold color which is not to be accounted for, and proved right and full of meaning.

I do not say that Salvator's distance is not artist-like ; both in that, and in the yet more glaringly false distances of Titian above alluded to, and in hundreds of others of equal boldness of exaggeration, I can take delight, and perhaps should be sorry to see them other than they are ; but it is somewhat singular to hear people talking of Turner's exquisite care and watchfulness in color as false, while they receive such cases of preposterous and audacious fiction with the most generous and simple credulity.

Again, in the upper sky of the picture of Nicolas Poussin, before noticed, the clouds are of a very fine clear olive-green, about the same tint as the brightest parts of the trees beneath them. They cannot have altered, (or else the trees must have been painted in gray,) for the hue is harmonious and well united with the rest of the picture, and the blue and white in the centre of the sky are still fresh and pure. Now a green sky in open and illumined distance is very frequent, and very beautiful ; but rich olive-green clouds, as far as I am acquainted with nature, are a piece of color in which

§ 5. Poussin, and
Claude.

she is not apt to indulge. You will be puzzled to show me such a thing in the recent works of Turner.* Again, take any important group of trees, I do not care whose—Claude's, Salvator's, or Poussin's—with lateral light (that in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, or Gaspar's sacrifice of Isaac, for instance :) Can it be seriously supposed that those murky browns and melancholy greens are representative of the tints of leaves under full noonday sun? I know that you cannot help looking upon all these pictures as pieces of dark relief against a light wholly proceeding from the distances; but they are nothing of the kind—they are noon and morning effects with full lateral light. Be so kind as to match the color of a leaf in the sun (the darkest you like) as nearly as you can, and bring your matched color and set it beside one of these groups of trees, and take a blade of common grass, and set it beside any part of the fullest light of their foregrounds, and then talk about the truth of color of the old masters!

And let not arguments respecting the sublimity or fidelity of *impression* be brought forward here. I have nothing whatever to do with this at present. I am not talking about what is sublime, but about what is true. People attack Turner on this ground;—they never speak of beauty or sublimity with respect to him, but of nature and truth, and let them support their own favorite masters on the same grounds. Perhaps I may have the very deepest veneration for the *feeling* of the old masters, but I must not let it influence me now—my business is to match colors, not to talk sentiment. Neither let it be said that I am going too much into details, and that general truths may be obtained by local falsehood. Truth is only to be measured by

* There is perhaps nothing more characteristic of a great colorist than his power of using greens in strange places without their being felt as such, or at least than a constant preference of green gray to purple gray. And this hue of Poussin's clouds would have been perfectly agreeable and allowable, had there been gold or crimson enough in the rest of the picture to have thrown it into gray. It is only because the lower clouds are pure white and blue, and because the trees are of the same color as the clouds, that the cloud color becomes false. There is a fine instance of a sky, green in itself, but turned gray by the opposition of warm color, in Turner's Devonport with the Dockyards.

close comparison of actual facts ; we may talk forever about it in generals, and prove nothing. We cannot tell what effect falsehood may produce on this or that person, but we can very well tell what is false and what is not, and if it produce on our senses the effect of truth, that only demonstrates their imperfection and inaccuracy, and need of cultivation. Turner's color is glaring to one person's sensations, and beautiful to another's. This proves nothing. Poussin's color is right to one, soot to another. This proves nothing. There is no means of arriving at any conclusion but close comparison of both with the known and demonstrable hues of nature, and this comparison will invariably turn Claude or Poussin into blackness, and even Turner into gray.

Whatever depth of gloom may seem to invest the objects of a real landscape, yet a window with that landscape seen through it, will invariably appear a broad space of light as compared with the shade of the room walls ; and this single circumstance may prove to us both the intensity and the diffusion of daylight in open air, and the necessity, if a picture is to be truthful in effect of color, that it should tell as a broad space of graduated illumination—not, as do those of the old masters, as a patch-work of black shades. Their works are nature in mourning weeds,—*ὁὐδ' ἐν ἡλίῳ καθαρῷ τεθραμμένοι, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ συμ-
μιγῇ σκιᾷ.*

It is true that there are, here and there, in the Academy pictures, passages in which Turner has translated the unattainable intensity of one tone of color, into the attainable pitch of a higher one : the golden green for instance, of intense sunshine on verdure, into pure yellow, because he knows it to be impossible, with any mixture of blue whatsoever, to give faithfully its relative intensity of light, and Turner always will have his light and shade right, whatever it costs him in color. But he does this in rare cases, and even then over very small spaces ; and I should be obliged to his critics if they would go out to some warm, mossy green bank in full summer sunshine, and try to reach its tone ; and when they find, as find they will, Indian yellow and chrome look dark beside it, let them tell me candidly which is nearest truth, the gold of Turner, or the mourning and murky olive browns and verdigris

§ 6. Turner's
translation of
colors.

greens in which Claude, with the industry and intelligence of a Sevres china painter, drags the laborious bramble leaves over his childish foreground.

But it is singular enough that the chief attacks on Turner for overcharged brilliancy, are made, not when there could be any possibility be any chance of his outstepping nature, but when he has taken subjects which no colors of

§ 7. Notice of effects in which no earth could ever vie with or reach, such, for brilliancy of art can even approach stance, as his sunsets among the high clouds. that of reality.

When I come to speak of skies, I shall point out what divisions, proportioned to their elevation, exist in the character of clouds. It is the highest region,—that exclusively characterized by white, filmy, multitudinous, and quiet clouds, arranged in bars, or streaks, or flakes, of which I speak at present, a region which no landscape painters have ever made one effort to represent, except Rubens and Turner—the latter taking it for his most favorite and frequent study. Now we have been speaking hitherto of what is constant and necessary in nature, of the ordinary effects of daylight on ordinary colors, and we repeat again, that no gorgeousness of the pallet can reach even these. But it is a widely different thing when nature herself takes a coloring fit, and does something extraordinary, something really to exhibit her power. She has a thousand ways and means of rising above herself, but incomparably the noblest manifestations of her capability of color are in these sunsets among the high clouds. I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose-color, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapor, which would in common daylight be pure snow white, and which give therefore fair field to the tone of light. There is then no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity of the hues assumed. The whole sky from the zenith to the horizon becomes one molten, mantling sea of color and fire; every black bar turns into massy gold, every ripple and wave into unsullied, shadowless, crimson, and purple, and scarlet, and colors for which there are no words in language, and no ideas in the mind,—things which can only be conceived while they are visible,—the intense hollow blue of the upper sky melt-

ing through it all,—showing here deep, and pure, and lightless, there, modulated by the filmy, formless body of the transparent vapor, till it is lost imperceptibly in its crimson and gold. Now there is no connection, no one link of association or resemblance, between those skies and the work of any mortal hand but Turner's. He alone has followed nature in these her highest efforts: he follows her faithfully, but far behind; follows at such a distance below her intensity that the Napoleon of last year's exhibition, and the Temeraire of the year before, would look colorless and cold if the eye came upon them after one of nature's sunsets among the high clouds. But there are a thou-

§ 8. Reasons for the usual incredulity of the observer with respect to their representation.

sand reasons why this should not be believed. The concurrence of circumstances necessary to produce the sunsets of which I speak does not take place above five or six times in the summer, and then only for a space of from five to ten minutes, just as the sun reaches the horizon. Considering how seldom people think of looking for sunset at all, and how seldom, if they do, they are in a position from which it can be fully seen, the chances that their attention should be awake, and their position favorable, during these few flying instants of the year, is almost as nothing. What can the citizen, who can see only the red light on the canvas of the wagon at the end of the street, and the crimson color of the bricks of his neighbor's chimney, know of the flood of fire which deluges the sky from the horizon to the zenith? What can even the quiet inhabitant of the English lowlands, whose scene for the manifestation of the fire of heaven is limited to the tops of hayricks, and the rooks' nests in the old elm-trees, know of the mighty passages of splendor which are tossed from Alp to Alp over the azure of a thousand miles of champaign? Even granting the constant vigor of observation, and supposing the possession of such impossible knowledge, it needs but a moment's reflection to prove how incapable the memory is of retaining for any time the distinct image of the sources even of its most vivid impressions. What recollection have we of the sunsets which delighted us last year? We may know that they were magnificent, or glowing, but no distinct image of color or form is retained—nothing of whose degree (for the great difficulty with the memory is to retain, not

facts, but *degrees* of fact) we could be so certain as to say of anything now presented to us, that it is like it. If we did say so, we should be wrong ; for we may be quite certain that the energy of an impression fades from the memory, and becomes more and more indistinct every day ; and thus we compare a faded and indistinct image with the decision and certainty of one present to the senses. How constantly do we affirm that the thunder-storm of last week was the most terrible one we ever saw in our lives, because we compare it, not with the thunder-storm of last year, but with the faded and feeble recollection of it. And so, when we enter an exhibition, as we have no definite standard of truth before us, our feelings are toned down and subdued to the quietness of color which is all that human power can ordinarily attain to ; and when we turn to a piece of higher and closer truth, approaching the pitch of the color of nature, but to which we are not guided, as we should be in nature, by corresponding gradations of light everywhere around us, but which is isolated and cut off suddenly by a frame and a wall, and surrounded by darkness and coldness, what can we expect but that it should surprise and shock the feelings? Suppose, where the

§ 9. Color of the Napoleon. Napoleon hung in the Academy last year, there could have been left, instead, an opening in the wall, and through that opening, in the midst of the obscurity of the dim room and the smoke-laden atmosphere, there could suddenly have been poured the full glory of a tropical sunset, reverberated from the sea : How would you have shrunk, blinded, from its scarlet and intolerable lightnings ! What picture in the room would not have been blackness after it ? And why then do you blame Turner because he dazzles you ? Does not the falsehood rest with those who do *not* ? There was not one hue in this whole picture which was not far below what nature would have used in the same circumstances, nor was there one inharmonious or at variance with the rest ;—the stormy blood-red of the horizon, the scarlet of the breaking sunlight, the rich crimson browns of the wet and illumined sea-weed ; the pure gold and purple of the upper sky, and, shed through it all, the deep passage of solemn blue, where the cold moonlight fell on one pensive spot of the limitless shore—all were given with harmony as perfect as their color was intense ; and if, instead of passing, as

I doubt not you did, in the hurry of your unreflecting prejudice, you had paused but so much as one quarter of an hour before the picture, you would have found the sense of air and space blended with every line, and breathing in every cloud, and every color instinct and radiant with visible, glowing, absorbing light.

It is to be observed, however, in general, that wherever in brilliant effects of this kind, we approach to anything like a true statement of nature's color, there must yet be a distinct

§ 10. Necessary
discrepancy be-
tween the attain-
able brilliancy of
color and light.

difference in the impression we convey, because we cannot approach her *light*. All such hues are usually given by her with an accompanying intensity of sunbeams which dazzles and overpowers the eye, so that it cannot rest on the actual colors, nor understand what they are ; and hence in art, in rendering all effects of this kind, there must be a want of the ideas of *imitation*, which are the great source of enjoyment to the ordinary observer ; because we can only give one series of truths, those of color, and are unable to give the accompanying truths of light, so that the more true we are in color, the greater, ordinarily, will be the discrepancy felt between the intensity of hue and the feebleness of light. But the painter who really loves nature will not, on this account, give you a faded and feeble image, which indeed may appear to you to be right, because your feelings can detect no discrepancy in its parts, but which he knows to derive its apparent truth from a systematized falsehood. No ; he will make you understand and feel that art *cannot* imitate nature—that where it appears to do so, it must malign her, and mock her. He will give you, or state to you, such truths as are in his power, completely and perfectly ; and those which he cannot give, he will leave to your imagination. If you are acquainted with nature, you will know all he has given to be true, and you will supply from your memory and from your heart that light which he cannot give. If you are unacquainted with nature, seek elsewhere for whatever may happen to satisfy your feelings ; but do not ask for the truth which you would not acknowledge and could not enjoy.

Nevertheless the aim and struggle of the artist must always be to do away with this discrepancy as far as the powers of art admit, not by lowering his color, but by increasing his light.

§ 11. This discrepancy less in Turner than in other colorists.

And it is indeed by this that the works of Turner are peculiarly distinguished from those of all other colorists, by the dazzling intensity, namely, of the light which he sheds through every hue, and which far more than their brilliant color, is the real source of their overpowering effect upon the eye, an effect so *reasonably* made the subject of perpetual animadversion, as if the sun which they represent were quite a quiet, and subdued, and gentle, and manageable luminary, and never dazzled anybody, under any circumstances whatsoever. I am fond of standing by a bright Turner in the Academy, to listen to the unintentional compliments of the crowd—"What a glaring thing!" "I declare I can't look at it!" "Don't it hurt your eyes?"—expressed as if they were in the constant habit of looking the sun full in the face, with the most perfect comfort and entire facility of vision. It is curious

§ 12. Its great extent in a landscape attributed to Rubens.

after hearing people malign some of Turner's noble passages of light, to pass to some really ungrammatical and false picture of the old masters, in which we have color given *without* light. Take, for instance, the landscape attributed to Rubens, No. 175, in the Dulwich Gallery. I never have spoken, and I never will speak of Rubens but with the most reverential feeling; and whatever imperfections in his art may have resulted from his unfortunate want of seriousness and incapability of true passion, his calibre of mind was originally such that I believe the world may see another Titian and another Raffaele, before it sees another Rubens. But I have before alluded to the violent license he occasionally assumes; and there is an instance of it in this picture apposite to the immediate question. The sudden streak and circle of yellow and crimson in the middle of the sky of that picture, being the occurrence of a fragment of a sunset color in pure daylight, and in perfect isolation, while at the same time it is rather darker, when translated into light and shade, than brighter than the rest of the sky, is a case of such bold absurdity, come from whose pencil it may, that if every error which Turner has fallen into in the whole course of his life were concentrated into one, that one would not equal it; and as our connoisseurs gaze upon this with never-ending approbation, we must not be surprised that the accurate perceptions which true

take delight in pure fiction, should consistently be disgusted by Turner's fidelity and truth.

Hitherto, however, we have been speaking of vividness of pure color, and showing that it is used by Turner only where nature uses it, and in no less degree. But we have hitherto, therefore, been speaking of a most limited and uncharacteristic portion of his works ; for Turner, like all great colorists, is distinguished not more for his power of dazzling and overwhelming the eye with intensity of effect, than for his power of doing so by the use of subdued and gentle means. There is no man living more cautious and sparing in the use of pure color than Turner. To say that he never perpetrates anything like the blue excrescences of foreground, or hills *shot* like a housekeeper's best silk gown, with blue and red, which certain of our celebrated artists consider the essence of the sublime, would be but a poor compliment. I might as well praise the portraits of Titian because they have not the grimace and paint of a clown in a pantomime ; but I do say, and say with confidence, that there is scarcely a landscape artist of the present day, however sober and lightless their effects may look, who does not employ more pure and raw color than Turner ; and that the ordinary tinsel and trash, or rather vicious and perilous stuff, according to the power of the mind producing it, with which the walls of our Academy are half covered, disgracing, in weak hands, or in more powerful, degrading and corrupting our whole school of art, is based on a system of color beside which Turner's is as Vesta to Cotytto—the chastity of fire to the foulness of earth. Every picture of this great colorist has, in one or two parts of it, (key-notes of the whole,) points where the system of each individual color is concentrated by a single stroke, as pure as it can come from the pallet ; but throughout the great space and extent of even the most brilliant of his works, there will not be found a raw color : that is to say, there is no warmth which has not gray in it, and no blue which has not warmth in it ; and the tints in which he most excels and distances all other men, the most cherished and inimitable portions of his color, are, as with all perfect colorists they must be, his grays.

It is instructive in this respect, to compare the sky of the

§ 13. Turner scarcely ever uses pure or vivid color.

Mercury and Argus with the various illustrations of the serenity, space, and sublimity naturally inherent in blue and pink, of which every year's exhibition brings forward enough and to spare. In the Mercury and Argus, the pale and vaporous blue of the heated sky is broken with gray and pearly white, the gold color of the light warming it more or less as it approaches or retires from the sun ; but throughout, there is not a grain of pure blue ; all is subdued and warmed at the same time by the mingling gray and gold, up to the very zenith, where, breaking through the flaky mist, the transparent and deep azure of the sky is expressed with a single crumbling touch ; the key-note of the whole is given, and every part of it passes at once far into glowing and aerial space. The reader can scarcely fail to remember at once sundry works in contradistinction to this, with great names attached to them, in which the sky is a sheer piece of plumber's and glazier's work, and should be valued per yard, with heavy extra charge for ultramarine.

Throughout the works of Turner, the same truthful principle of delicate and subdued color is carried out with a care and labor of which it is difficult to form a conception. He gives a dash of pure white for his highest light ; but all the other whites of his picture are pearled down with gray or gold. He gives a fold of pure crimson to the drapery of his nearest figure, but all his other crimsons will be deepened with black, or warmed with yellow. In one deep reflection of his distant sea, we catch a trace of the purest blue ; but all the rest is palpitating with a varied and delicate gradation of harmonized tint, which indeed looks vivid blue as a mass, but is only so by opposition. It is the most difficult, the most rare thing, to find in his works a definite space, however small, of unconnected color ; that is, either of a blue which has nothing to connect it with the warmth, or of a warm color which has nothing to connect it with the grays of the whole ; and the result is, that there is a general system and under-current of gray pervading the whole of his color, out of which his highest lights, and those local touches of pure color, which are, as I said before, the key-notes of the picture, flash with the peculiar brilliancy and intensity in which he stands alone.

§ 14. The basis of gray, under all his vivid hues.

Intimately associated with this toning down and connection of the colors actually used, is his inimitable power of varying and blending them, so as never to give a quarter of an inch of

§ 15. The variety of his most simple tones. canvas without a change in it, a melody as well as a harmony of one kind or another. Observe, I am

not at present speaking of this as artistical or desirable in itself, not as a characteristic of the great colorist, but as the aim of the simple follower of nature. For it is strange to see how marvellously nature varies the most general and simple of her tones. A mass of mountain seen against the light, may, at first, appear all of one blue; and so it is, blue as a whole, by comparison with other parts of the landscape. But look how that blue is made up. There are black shadows in it under the crags, there are green shadows along the turf, there are gray half-lights upon the rocks, there are faint touches of stealthy warmth and cautious light along their edges; every bush, every stone, every tuft of moss has its voice in the matter, and joins with individual character in the universal will. Who is there who can do this as Turner will? The old masters would have settled the matter at once with a transparent, agreeable, but monotonous gray. Many among the moderns would probably be equally monotonous with absurd and false colors. Turner only would give the uncertainty—the palpitating, perpetual change—the subjection of all to a great influence, without one part or portion being lost or merged in it—the unity of action with infinity of agent. And I wish to insist on this the

§ 16. Following the infinite and unapproachable variety of nature.

more particularly, because it is one of the eternal principles of nature, that she will not have one line nor color, nor one portion nor atom of space without a change in it. There is not one of her shadows, tints, or lines that is not in a state of perpetual variation: I do not mean in time, but in space. There is not a leaf in the world which has the *same color* visible over its whole surface; it has a white high light somewhere; and in proportion as it curves to or from that focus, the color is brighter or grayer. Pick up a common flint from the roadside, and count, if you can, its changes and hues of color. Every bit of bare ground under your feet has in it a thousand such—the gray pebbles, the warm ochre, the green of incipient vegetation, the grays and blacks of its reflexes and

shadows, might keep a painter at work for a month, if he were obliged to follow them touch for touch : how much more, when the same infinity of change is carried out with vastness of object and space. The extreme of distance may appear at first monotonous ; but the least examination will show it to be full of every kind of change—that its outlines are perpetually melting and appearing again—sharp here, vague there—now lost altogether, now just hinted and still confused among each other—and so forever in a state and necessity of change. Hence, wherever in a painting we have unvaried color extended even over a small space, there is falsehood. Nothing can be natural which is monotonous ; nothing true which only tells one story. The brown foreground and rocks of Claude's *Sinon* before Priam are as false as color can be : first, because there never was such a brown under sunlight, for even the sand and cinders (volcanic tufa) about Naples, granting that he had studied from these ugliest of all formations, are, where they are fresh fractured, golden and lustrous in full light compared to these ideals of crag, and become, like all other rocks, quiet and gray when weathered ; and secondly, because no rock that ever nature stained is without its countless breaking tints of varied vegetation. And even Stanfield, master as he is of rock form, is apt in the same way to give us here and there a little bit of mud, instead of stone.

What I am next about to say with respect to Turner's color, I should wish to be received with caution, as it admits of dispute. I think that the first approach to viciousness of color in

any master is commonly indicated chiefly by a prevalence of purple, and an absence of yellow. I think nature mixes yellow with almost every one of her hues, never, or very rarely, using red without it, but frequently using yellow with scarcely any red ; and I believe it will be in consequence found that her favorite opposition, that which generally characterizes and gives tone to her color, is yellow and black, passing, as it retires, into white and blue. It is beyond dispute that the great fundamental opposition of Rubens is yellow and black ; and that on this, concentrated in one part of the picture, and modified in various grays throughout, chiefly depend the tones of all his

§ 17. His dislike of purple and fondness for the opposition of yellow and black. The principles of nature in this respect.

finest works. And in Titian, though there is a far greater tendency to the purple than in Rubens, I believe no red is ever mixed with the pure blue, or glazed over it, which has not in it a modifying quantity of yellow. At all events, I am nearly certain that whatever rich and pure purples are introduced locally, by the great colorists, nothing is so destructive of all fine color as the slightest tendency to purple in general tone ; and I am equally certain that Turner is distinguished from all the vicious colorists of the present day, by the foundation of all his tones being black, yellow, and the intermediate grays, while the tendency of our common glare-seekers is invariably to pure, cold, impossible purples. So fond indeed is Turner of black and yellow, that he has given us more than one composition, both drawings and paintings, based on these two colors alone, of which the magnificent *Quillebœuf*, which I consider one of the most perfect pieces of simple color existing, is a most striking example ; and I think that where, as in some of the late Venices, there has been something like a marked appearance of purple tones, even though exquisitely corrected by vivid orange and warm green in the foreground, the general color has not been so perfect or truthful : my own feelings would always guide me rather to the warm grays of such pictures as the *Snow Storm*, or the glowing scarlet and gold of the *Napoleon and Slave Ship*. But I do not insist at present on this part of the subject, as being perhaps more proper for future examination, when we are considering the ideal of color.

The above remarks have been made entirely with reference to the recent Academy pictures, which have been chiefly attacked for their color. I by no means intend them to apply to the early works of Turner, those which the enlightened newspaper critics are perpetually talking about as characteristic of a time when Turner was “really great.” He is, and was, really great, from the time when he first could hold a brush, but he never was so great as he is now. The *Crossing the Brook*, glorious as it is as a composition, and perfect in all that is most desirable and most ennobling in art, is scarcely to be looked upon as a piece of color ; it is an agreeable, cool, gray rendering of space and form, but it is not color ; if it be regarded as such, it is thoroughly false and vapid,

§ 18. His early works are false in color.

and very far inferior to the tones of the same kind given by Claude. The reddish brown in the foreground of the Fall of Carthage, with all diffidence be it spoken, is, as far as my feelings are competent to judge, crude, sunless, and in every way wrong; and both this picture and the Building of Carthage, though this latter is far the finer of the two, are quite unworthy of Turner as a colorist.

Not so with the drawings; these, countless as they are, from the earliest to the latest, though presenting an unbroken chain of increasing difficulty overcome, and truth illustrated, are all, according to their aim, equally faultless as to color. § 19. His drawings invariably perfect. Whatever we have hitherto said, applies to them in its fullest extent; though each, being generally the realization of some effect actually seen, and realized but once, requires almost a separate essay. As a class, they are far quieter and chaster than the Academy pictures, and, were they better known, might enable our connoisseurs to form a somewhat more accurate judgment of the intense study of nature on which all Turner's color is based.

One point only remains to be noted respecting his system of color generally—its entire subordination to light and shade, a subordination which there is no need to prove here, as every engraving from his works—and few are unengraved—is sufficient demonstration of it. § 20. The subjection of his system of color to that of chiaroscuro. I have before shown the inferiority and unimportance in nature of color, as a truth, compared with light and shade. That inferiority is maintained and asserted by all really great works of color; but most by Turner's as their color is most intense. Whatever brilliancy he may choose to assume, is subjected to an inviolable law of chiaroscuro, from which there is no appeal. No richness nor depth of tint is considered of value enough to atone for the loss of one particle of arranged light. No brilliancy of hue is permitted to interfere with the depth of a determined shadow. And hence it is, that while engravings from works far less splendid in color are often vapid and cold, because the little color employed has not been rightly based on light and shade, an engraving from Turner is always beautiful and forcible in proportion as the color of the original has been intense, and never in a single instance has

failed to express the picture as a perfect composition.* Powerful and captivating and faithful as his color is, it is the least important of all his excellences, because it is the least important feature of nature. He paints in color, but he thinks in light and shade ; and were it necessary, rather than lose one line of his forms, or one ray of his sunshine, would, I apprehend, be content to paint in black and white to the end of his life. It is by mistaking the shadow for the substance, and aiming at the brilliancy and the fire, without perceiving of what deep-studied

* This is saying too much ; for it not unfrequently happens that the light and shade of the original is lost in the engraving, the effect of which is afterwards partially recovered, with the aid of the artist himself, by introductions of new features. Sometimes, when a drawing depends chiefly on color, the engraver gets unavoidably embarrassed, and must be assisted by some change or exaggeration of the effect ; but the more frequent case is, that the engraver's difficulties result merely from his inattention to, or wilful deviations from his original ; and that the artist is obliged to assist him by such expedients as the error itself suggests.

Not unfrequently in reviewing a plate, as very constantly in reviewing a picture after some time has elapsed since its completion, even the painter is liable to make unnecessary or hurtful changes. In the plate of the *Old Temeraire*, lately published in Finden's gallery, I do not know whether it was Turner or the engraver who broke up the water into sparkling ripple, but it was a grievous mistake, and has destroyed the whole dignity and value of the conception. The flash of lightning in the *Winchelsea* of the *England* series does not exist in the original ; it is put in to withdraw the attention of the spectator from the sky which the engraver destroyed.

There is an unfortunate persuasion among modern engravers that color can be expressed by particular characters of line ; and in the endeavor to distinguish by different lines, different colors of equal depth, they frequently lose the whole system of light and shade. It will hardly be credited that the piece of foreground on the left of Turner's *Modern Italy*, represented in the *Art-Union* engraving as nearly coal black, is in the original of a pale warm gray, hardly darker than the sky. All attempt to record color in engraving, is heraldry out of its place : the engraver has no power beyond that of expressing transparency or opacity by greater or less openness of line, (for the same depth of tint is producible by lines with very different intervals.)

Texture of surface is only in a measure in the power of the steel, and ought not to be laboriously sought after ; nature's surfaces are distinguished more by form than texture ; a stone is often smoother than a leaf ; but if texture is to be given, let the engraver at least be sure that he knows what the texture of the object actually is, and how to represent it. The leaves in the foreground of the engraved *Mercury* and *Argus* have all of them three

shade and inimitable form it is at once the result and the illustration, that the host of his imitators sink into deserved disgrace. With him, as with all the greatest painters, and in Turner's more than all, the hue is a beautiful auxiliary in working out the great impression to be conveyed, but is not the source nor the essence of that impression : it is little more than a visible melody, given to raise and assist the mind in the reception of nobler ideas—as sacred passages of sweet sound, to prepare the feelings for the reading of the mysteries of God.

or four black lines across them. What sort of leaf texture is supposed to be represented by these ? The stones in the foreground of Turner's Llanthony received from the artist the powdery texture of sandstone ; the engraver covered them with contorted lines and turned them into old timber.

A still more fatal cause of failure is the practice of making out or finishing what the artist left incomplete. In the England plate of Dudley, there are two offensive blank windows in the large building with the chimney on the left. These *are* engraver's improvements ; in the original they are barely traceable, their lines being excessively faint and tremulous as with the movement of heated air between them and the spectator : their vulgarity is thus taken away, and the whole building left in one grand unbroken mass. It is almost impossible to break engravers of this unfortunate habit. I have even heard of their taking journeys of some distance in order to obtain knowledge of the details which the artist intentionally omitted ; and the evil will necessarily continue until they receive something like legitimate artistical education. In one or two instances, however, especially in small plates, they have shown great feeling ; the plates of Miller (especially those of the Turner illustrations to Scott) are in most instances perfect and beautiful interpretations of the originals ; so those of Goodall in Rogers's works, and Cousens's in the Rivers of France ; those of the Yorkshire series are also very valuable, though singularly inferior to the drawings. But none even of these men appear capable of producing a large plate. They have no knowledge of the means of rendering their lines vital or valuable ; cross-hatching stands for everything ; and inexcusably, for though we cannot expect every engraver to etch like Rembrandt or Albert Durer, or every wood-cutter to draw like Titian, at least something of the system and power of the grand works of those men might be preserved, and some mind and meaning stolen into the reticulation of the restless modern lines.

CHAPTER III.

OF TRUTH OF CHIAROSCURO.

It is not my intention to enter, in the present portion of the work, upon any examination of Turner's particular effects of light. We must know something about what is beautiful before

§ 1. We are not at present to examine particular effects of light. we speak of these.

At present I wish only to insist upon two great principles of chiaroscuro, which are observed throughout the works of the great modern master, and set at defiance by the ancients—great general laws, which may, or may not, be sources of beauty, but whose observance is indisputably necessary to truth.

Go out some bright sunny day in winter, and look for a tree with a broad trunk, having rather delicate boughs hanging down on the sunny side, near the trunk. Stand four or five yards from it, with your back to the sun. You will find that the boughs between you and the trunk of the tree are very indistinct, that you confound them in places with the trunk itself, and cannot possibly trace one of them from its insertion to its extremity. But the shadows which they cast upon the trunk, you will find clear, dark, and distinct, perfectly traceable through their whole course, except when they are interrupted by the crossing boughs. And if you retire backwards, you will come to a point where you cannot see the intervening boughs at all, or only a fragment of them here and there, but can still see their shadows perfectly plain. Now, this may serve to show you the immense prominence and importance of shadows where there is anything like bright light. They are, in fact, commonly far more conspicuous than the thing which casts them, for being as large as the casting object, and altogether made up of a blackness deeper than the darkest part of the casting object, (while that object is also broken up with positive and reflected

lights,) their large, broad, unbroken spaces, tell strongly on the eye, especially as all form is rendered partially, often totally invisible within them, and as they are suddenly terminated by the sharpest lines which nature ever shows. For no outline of objects whatsoever is so sharp as the edge of a close shadow. Put your finger over a piece of white paper in the sun, and observe the difference between the softness of the outline of the finger itself and the decision of the edge of the shadow. And note also the excessive gloom of the latter. A piece of black cloth, laid in the light, will not attain one-fourth of the blackness of the paper under the shadow.

Hence shadows are in reality, when the sun is shining, the most conspicuous thing in a landscape, next to the highest lights. All forms are understood and explained chiefly by their agency : the roughness of the bark of a tree, for instance, is not seen in the light, nor in the shade : it is only seen between the two, where the shadows of the ridges explain it. And hence, if we have to express vivid light, our very first aim must be to get the shadows sharp and visible ; and this is not to be done by blackness, (though indeed chalk on white paper is the only thing which comes up to the intensity of real shadows,) but by keeping them perfectly flat, keen, and even. A very pale shadow, if it be quite flat—if it conceal the details of the objects it crosses—if it be gray and cold compared to their color, and very sharp edged, will be far more conspicuous, and make everything out of it look a great deal more like sunlight, than a shadow ten times its depth, shaded off at the edge, and confounded with

§ 2. And therefore the distinctness of shadows is the chief means of expressing vividness of light.

§ 3. Total absence of such distinctness in the works of the Italian school.

the color of the objects on which it falls. Now the old masters of the Italian school, in almost all their works, directly reverse this principle : they blacken their shadows till the picture becomes quite appalling, and everything in it invisible ; but they make a point of losing their edges, and carrying them off by gradation ; in consequence utterly destroying every appearance of sunlight. All their shadows are the faint, secondary darknesses of mere *daylight* ; the sun has nothing whatever to do with them. The shadow between the pages of the book which you hold in your hand is distinct and visible enough, (though you are, I sup

pose, reading it by the ordinary daylight of your room,) out of the sun ; and this weak and secondary shadow is all that we ever find in the Italian masters, as indicative of sunshine. Even Cuyt and Berghem, though they know thoroughly well what they are about in their foregrounds, forget the principle in their distances ; and though in Claude's seaports, where he has plain architecture to deal with, he gives us something like real shadows along the stones, the moment we come to ground and foliage with lateral light, away go the shadows and the sun together. In the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, in our own gallery, the trunks of the trees between the water-wheel and the white figure in the middle distance, are dark and visible ; but their shadows are scarcely discernible on the ground, and are quite vague and lost in the building. In nature, every bit of the shadow would have been darker than the darkest part of the trunks, and both on the ground and building would have been defined and conspicuous ; while the trunks themselves would have been faint, confused, and indistinguishable, in their illumined parts, from the grass or distance. So in Poussin's Phocion, the shadow of the stick on the stone in the right-hand corner, is shaded off and lost, while you see the stick plain all the way. In nature's sunlight it would have been the direct reverse—you would have seen the shadow black and sharp all the way down, but you would have had to look for the stick, which in all probability would in several places have been confused with the stone behind it.

And so throughout the works of Claude, Poussin, and Salvator, we shall find, especially in their conventional foliage, and unarticulated barbarisms of rock, that their whole sum and substance of chiaroscuro is merely the gradation and variation which nature gives in the *body* of her shadows, and that all which they do to express sunshine, she does to vary shade. They take only one step, while she always takes two ; marking, in the first place, with violent decision, the great transition from sun to shade, and then varying the shade itself with a thousand gentle gradations and double shadows, in themselves equivalent, and more than equivalent, to all that the old masters did for their entire chiaroscuro.

Now if there be one principle, or secret more than another, on which Turner depends for attaining brilliancy of light, it is

§ 4. And partial
absence in the
Dutch.

his clear and exquisite drawing of the *shadows*. Whatever is obscure, misty, or undefined in his objects or his atmosphere, he takes care that the shadows be sharp and clear—and then he knows that the light will take care of itself, and he makes them clear, not by blackness, but by excessive evenness, unity, and sharpness of edge. He will keep them clear and distinct, and make them felt as shadows, though they are so faint, that, but for their decisive forms, we should not have observed them for darkness at all. He will throw them one after another like transparent veils, along the earth and upon the air, till the whole picture palpitates with them, and yet the darkest of them will be a faint gray, imbued and penetrated with light. The pavement on the left of the *Hero and Leander*, is about the most thorough piece of this kind of sorcery that I remember in art; but of the general principle, not one of his works is without constant evidence. Take the vignette of the garden opposite the title-page of Rogers's *Poems*, and note the drawing of the nearest balustrade on the right. The balusters themselves are faint and misty, and the light through them feeble; but the shadows of them are sharp and dark, and the intervening light as intense as it can be left. And see how much more distinct the shadow of the running figure is on the pavement, than the checkers of the pavement itself. Observe the shadows on the trunk of the tree at page 91, how they conquer all the details of the trunk itself, and become darker and more conspicuous than any part of the boughs or limbs, and so in the vignette to Campbell's *Beech-tree's Petition*. Take the beautiful concentration of all that is most characteristic of Italy as she is, at page 168 of Rogers's *Italy*, where we have the long shadows of the trunks made by far the most conspicuous thing in the whole foreground, and hear how Wordsworth, the keenest-eyed of all modern poets for what is deep and essential in nature, illustrates Turner here, as we shall find him doing in all other points.

“ At the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches tow'ards me, like a long straight path,
Traced faintly in the greensward.”

So again in the Rhymer's Glen, (Illustrations to Scott,) note the intertwining of the shadows across the path, and the checkering of the trunks by them; and again on the bridge in the Armstrong's Tower; and yet more in the long avenue of Brienne, where we have a length of two or three miles expressed by the playing shadows alone, and the whole picture filled with sunshine by the long lines of darkness cast by the figures on the snow. The Hampton Court in the England series, is another very striking instance. In fact, the general system of execution observable in all Turner's drawings, is to work his grounds richly and fully, sometimes stippling, and giving infinity of delicate, mysterious, and ceaseless detail; and on the ground so prepared to cast his shadows with one dash of the brush, leaving an excessively sharp edge of watery color. Such at least is commonly the case in such coarse and broad instances as those I

§ 6. The effect of
his shadows upon
the light.

have above given. Words are not accurate enough, nor delicate enough to express or trace the constant, all-pervading influence of the finer and vaguer shadows throughout his works, that thrilling influence which gives to the light they leave, its passion and its power. There is not a stone, not a leaf, not a cloud, over which light is not felt to be actually passing and palpitating before our eyes. There is the motion, the actual wave and radiation of the darted beam—not the dull universal daylight, which falls on the landscape without life, or direction, or speculation, equal on all things and dead on all things; but the breathing, animated, exulting light, which feels, and receives, and rejoices, and acts—which chooses one thing and rejects another—which seeks, and finds, and loses again—leaping from rock to rock, from leaf to leaf, from wave to wave,—glowing, or flashing, or scintillating, according to what it strikes, or in its holier moods, absorbing and enfolding all things in the deep fulness of its repose, and then again losing itself in bewilderment, and doubt, and dimness; or perishing and passing away, entangled in drifting mist, or melted into melancholy air, but still,—kindling, or declining, sparkling or still, it is the living light, which breathes in its deepest, most entranced rest, which sleeps, but never dies.

I need scarcely insist farther on the marked distinction between the works of the old masters and those of the great

modern landscape-painters in this respect. It is one which the reader can perfectly well work out for himself, by the slightest systematic attention,—one which he will find existing, not merely between this work and that, but throughout the whole body of their productions, and down to every leaf and line. And a little careful watching of nature, especially in her foliage and foregrounds, and comparison of her with Claude, Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator, will soon show him that those artists worked entirely on conventional principles, not representing what they saw, but what they thought would make a handsome picture ; and even when they went to nature, which I believe to have been a very much rarer practice with them than their biographers would have us suppose, they copied her like children, drawing what they knew to be there, but not what they saw there.* I believe you may search the foregrounds of Claude, from one end of Europe to another, and you will not find the shadow of one leaf cast upon another. You will find leaf after leaf painted more or less boldly or brightly out of the black ground, and you will find dark leaves defined in perfect form upon the light ; but you will not find the form of a single leaf disguised or interrupted by the shadow of another. And Poussin and Salvator are still farther from anything like genuine truth. There is nothing in their pictures which might not be manufactured in their painting-room, with a branch or two of brambles and a bunch or two of weeds before them, to give them the form of the leaves. And it is refreshing to turn from their ignorant and impotent repetitions of childish conception, to the clear, close, genuine studies of modern artists ; for it is not Turner only, (though here, as in all other points, the first,) who is remarkable for fine and expressive decision of chiaroscuro. Some passages by J. D. Harding are thoroughly admirable in this respect, though this master is getting a little too much into a habit of general keen execution, which prevents the parts which ought to be especially decisive from being felt as such, and which makes his pictures, especially the large ones, look a little thin. But some of his later passages of rock foreground have,

* Compare Sect. II. Chap. II. § 6.

taken in the abstract, been beyond all praise, owing to the exquisite forms and firm expressiveness of their shadows. And the chiaroscuro of Stanfield is equally deserving of the most attentive study.

The second point to which I wish at present to direct attention has reference to the *arrangement* of light and shade. It is the constant habit of nature to use both her highest lights and deepest shadows in exceedingly small quantity ;

§ 8. Second great principle of chiaroscuro. Both high light and deep shadow are used in equal quantity and only in points.

always in points, never in masses. She will give a large mass of tender light in sky or water, impressive by its quantity, and a large mass of tender shadow relieved against it, in foliage, or hill, or building ; but the light is always subdued if it be extensive—the shadow always feeble if it be broad. She will then fill up all the rest of her picture with middle tints and pale grays of some sort or another, and on this quiet and harmonious whole, she will touch her high lights in spots—the foam of an isolated wave—the sail of a solitary vessel—the flash of the sun from a wet roof—the gleam of a single whitewashed cottage—or some such sources of local brilliancy, she will use so vividly and delicately as to throw everything else into definite shade by comparison. And then taking up the gloom, she will use the black hollows of some overhanging bank, or the black dress of some shaded figure, or the depth of some sunless chink of wall or window, so sharply as to throw everything else into definite light by comparison ; thus reducing the whole mass of her picture to a delicate middle tint, approaching, of course, here to light, and there to gloom ; but yet sharply separated from the utmost degrees either of the one or the other.

Now it is a curious thing that none of our writers on art seem to have noticed the great principle of nature in this respect. They all talk of deep shadow as a thing that may be given in quantity,—one fourth of the picture, or, in certain effects, much more. Barry, for instance, says that the practice of the great painters, who “ best understood the effects of chiaroscuro.” was, for the most part, to make the mass of middle tint larger than the light, and the mass of dark larger than the masses of light and middle tint together, *i.e.*, occupying more than one-half of the picture.

§ 9. Neglect or contradiction of this principle by writers on art.

Now I do not know what we are to suppose is meant by “understanding chiaroscuro.” If it means being able to manufacture agreeable patterns in the shape of pyramids, and crosses, and zigzags, into which arms and legs are to be persuaded, and passion and motion arranged, for the promotion and encouragement of the cant of criticism, such a principle may be productive of the most advantageous results. But if it means, being acquainted with the deep, perpetual, systematic, unintrusive simplicity and unwearied variety of nature’s chiaroscuro—if it means the perception that blackness and sublimity are not synonymous, and that space and light may possibly be coadjutors—then no man, who ever advocated or dreamed of such a prin-

§ 10. And consequent misguiding of the student.

ciple, is anything more than a novice, blunderer, and trickster in chiaroscuro. And my firm belief is, that though color is inveighed against by all artists, as the great Circe of art—the great transformer of mind into sensuality—no fondness for it, no study of it, is half so great a peril and stumbling-block to the young student, as the admiration he hears bestowed on such artificial, false, and juggling chiaroscuro, and the instruction he receives, based on such principles as that given us by Fuseli—that “mere natural light and shade, however separately or individually true, is not always legitimate chiaroscuro in art.” It may not always be agreeable to a sophisticated, unfeeling, and perverted mind; but the student had better throw up his art at once, than proceed on the conviction that any other can ever be *legitimate*. I believe I shall be perfectly well able to prove, in following parts of the work, that “mere natural light and shade” is the only fit and faithful attendant of the highest art; and that all tricks—all visible, intended arrangement—all extended shadows and narrow lights—everything in fact, in the least degree artificial, or tending to make the mind dwell upon light and shade as such, is an injury, instead of an aid, to conceptions of high ideal dignity. I believe I shall be able also to show, that nature manages her chiaroscuro a great deal more neatly and cleverly than people fancy;—that “mere natural light and shade” is a very much finer thing than most artists can put together, and that none think they can improve upon it but those who never understood it.

But however this may be, it is beyond dispute that every permission given to the student to amuse himself with painting one figure all black, and the next all white, and throwing them out with a background of nothing—every permission given to him to spoil his pocketbook with sixths of sunshine and sevenths of shade, and other such fractional sublimities, is so much more difficulty laid in the way of his ever becoming a master ; and that none are in the right road to real excellence, but those who are struggling to render the simplicity, purity, and inexhaustible variety of nature's own chiaroscuro in open, cloudless daylight, giving the expanse of harmonious light—the speaking, decisive shadow—and the exquisite grace, tenderness, and grandeur of aerial opposition of local color and equally illuminated lines. No chiaroscuro is so difficult as this ; and none so noble, chaste, or impressive. On this part of the subject, however, I must not enlarge at present. I wish now only to speak of those great principles of chiaroscuro, which nature observes, even when she is most working for effect—when she is playing with thunderclouds and sunbeams, and throwing one thing out and obscuring another, with the most marked artistical feeling and intention ;—even then, she never forgets her great rule, to give precisely the same quantity of deepest shade which she does of highest light, and no more ; points of the one answering to points of the other, and both vividly conspicuous and separated from all the rest of the landscape.

And it is most singular that this separation, which is the great source of brilliancy in nature, should not only be unobserved, but absolutely forbidden by our great writers on art, who are always talking about connecting the light with the shade by *imperceptible gradations*. Now so surely as this is done, all sunshine is lost, for imperceptible gradation from light to dark is the characteristic of objects seen out of sunshine, in what is, in landscape, shadow. Nature's principle of getting light is the direct reverse. She will cover her whole landscape with middle tint, in which she will have as many gradations as you please, and a great many more than you can paint ; but on this middle tint she touches her extreme lights, and extreme darks, isolated and sharp, so that the eye

§ 11. The great value of a simple chiaroscuro.

§ 12. The sharp separation of nature's lights from her middle tint.

goes to them directly, and feels them to be key-notes of the whole composition. And although the dark touches are less attractive than the light ones, it is not because they are less distinct, but because they exhibit nothing; while the bright touches are in parts where everything is seen, and where in consequence the eye goes to rest. But yet the high lights do not exhibit anything in themselves, they are too bright and dazzle the eye; and having no shadows in them, cannot exhibit form, for form can only be seen by shadow of some kind or another. Hence the highest lights and deepest darks agree in this, that nothing is seen in either of them; that both are in exceedingly small quantity, and both are marked and distinct from the middle tones of the landscape—the one by their brilliancy, the other by their sharp edges, even though many of the more energetic middle tints may approach their intensity very closely.

I need scarcely do more than tell you to glance at any one of the works of Turner, and you will perceive in a moment the exquisite observation of all these principles; the sharpness, decision, conspicuousness, and excessively small quantity, both of extreme light and extreme shade, all the mass of the picture being graduated and delicate middle tint. Take up the Rivers of France, for instance, and turn over a few of the plates in succession.

1. Chateau Gaillard (vignette.)—Black figures and boats, points of shade; sun-touches on castle, and wake of boat, of light. See how the eye rests on both, and observe how sharp and separate all the lights are, falling in spots, edged by shadow, but not melting off into it.

2. Orleans.—The crowded figures supply both points of shade and light. Observe the delicate middle tint of both in the whole mass of buildings, and compare this with the blackness of Canaletto's shadows, against which neither figures nor anything else can ever tell, as points of shade.

3. Blois.—White figures in boats, buttresses of bridge, dome of church on the right, for light; woman on horseback, heads of boats, for shadow. Note especially the isolation of the light on the church dome.

4. Chateau de Blois.—Torches and white figures for light, roof of chapel and monks' dresses for shade.

§ 13. The truth of
Turner.

5. Beaugency.—Sails and spire opposed to buoy and boats. An exquisite instance of brilliant, sparkling, isolated touches of morning light.

6. Amboise.—White sail and clouds ; cypresses under castle.

7. Chateau of Amboise.—The boat in the centre, with its reflections, needs no comment. Note the glancing lights under the bridge. This is a very glorious and perfect instance.

8. St. Julien, Tours.—Especially remarkable for its preservation of deep points of gloom, because the whole picture is one of extended shade.

I need scarcely go on. The above instances are taken as they happen to come, without selection. The reader can proceed for himself. I may, however, name a few cases of chiaroscuro more especially deserving of his study. Scene between Quillebœuf and Villequier,—Honfleur,—Light Towers of the Hève,—On the Seine between Mantes and Vernon,—The Lantern at St. Cloud,—Confluence of Seine and Marne,—Troyes,—the first and last vignette, and those at pages 36, 63, 95, 184, 192, 203, of Rogers's poems ; the first and second in Campbell, St. Maurice in the Italy, where note the black stork ; Brienne, Skid-daw, Mayburgh, Melrose, Jedburgh, in the illustrations to Scott, and the vignettes to Milton, not because these are one whit superior to others of his works, but because the laws of which we have been speaking are more strikingly developed in them, and because they have been well engraved. It is impossible to reason from the larger plates, in which half the chiaroscuro is totally destroyed by the haggling, blackening, and "making out" of the engravers.

CHAPTER IV.

OF TRUTH OF SPACE :—FIRST AS DEPENDENT ON THE FOCUS OF THE EYE.*

IN the first chapter of this section I noticed the distinction between real aerial perspective, and that overcharged contrast of light and shade by which the old masters obtained their deceptive effect ; and I showed that, though inferior to them in the precise quality or tone of aerial color, our great modern master is altogether more truthful in the expression of the proportionate relation of all his distances to one another. I am now about to examine those modes of expressing space, both in nature and art by far the most important, which are dependent, not on the relative hues of objects, but on the *drawing* of them : by far the most important, I say, because the most constant and certain ; for nature herself is not always aerial. Local effects are frequent which interrupt and violate the laws of aerial tone, and induce strange deception in our ideas of distance. I have often seen the summit of a snowy mountain look nearer than its base, owing to the perfect clearness of the upper air. But the *drawing* of objects, that is to say, the degree in which their details and parts are distinct or confused, is an unfailing and certain criterion of their distance ; and if this be rightly rendered in a painting, we shall have genuine truth of space, in spite of many errors in aerial tone ; while, if this be neglected, all space will

§ 1. Space is more clearly indicated by the drawing of objects than by their hue.

* I have left this chapter in its original place, because I am more than ever convinced of the truth of the position advanced in the 8th paragraph ; nor can I at present assign any other cause, than that here given, for what is there asserted ; and yet I cannot but think that I have allowed far too much influence to a change so slight as that which we insensibly make in the focus of the eye ; and that the real justification of Turner's practice, with respect to some of his foregrounds, is to be elsewhere sought. I leave the subject, therefore, to the reader's consideration.

be destroyed, whatever dexterity of tint may be employed to conceal the defective drawing.

First, then, it is to be noticed, that the eye, like any other lens, must have its focus altered, in order to convey a distinct image of objects at different distances ; so that it is totally im-

possible to see distinctly, at the same moment, two objects, one of which is much farther off than another. Of this, any one may convince himself in an instant. Look at the bars of your window-

§ 2. It is impossible to see objects at unequal distances distinctly at one moment.

frame, so as to get a clear image of their lines and form, and you cannot, while your eye is fixed on them, perceive anything but the most indistinct and shadowy images of whatever objects may be visible beyond. But fix your eyes on those objects, so as to see them clearly, and though they are just beyond and apparently beside the window-frame, that frame will only be felt or seen as a vague, flitting, obscure interruption to whatever is perceived beyond it. A little attention directed to this fact will convince every one of its universality, and prove beyond dispute that objects at unequal distances cannot be seen together, not from the intervention of air or mist, but from the impossibility of the rays proceeding from both, converging to the same focus, so that the whole impression, either of one or the other, must necessarily be confused, indistinct, and inadequate.

But, be it observed (and I have only to request that whatever I say may be tested by immediate experiment,) the difference of focus necessary is greatest within the first five hundred yards,

§ 3. Especially such as are both comparatively near.

and therefore, though it is totally impossible to see an object ten yards from the eye, and one a quarter of a mile beyond it, at the same moment, it is perfectly possible to see one a quarter of a mile off, and one five miles beyond it, at the same moment. The consequence of this is, practically, that in a real landscape, we can see the whole of what would be called the middle distance and distance together, with facility and clearness ; but while we do so we can see nothing in the foreground beyond a vague and indistinct arrangement of lines and colors ; and that if, on the contrary, we look at any foreground object, so as to receive a distinct impression of it, the distance and middle distance become all disorder and mystery.

And therefore, if in a painting our foreground is anything, our distance must be nothing, and *vice versa* ; for if we represent our near and distant objects as giving both at once that distinct image to the eye, which we receive in nature from each, when we look at them separately ;* and if we distinguish them from each other only by the air-tone ; and indistinctness dependent on positive distance, we violate one of the most essential principles of nature ; we represent that as seen at once which can only be seen by two separate acts of seeing, and tell a falsehood as gross as if we had represented four sides of a cubic object visible together.

§ 4. In painting, therefore, either the foreground or distance must be partially sacrificed.

Now, to this fact and principle, no landscape painter of the old school, as far as I remember, ever paid the slightest attention. Finishing their foregrounds clearly and sharply, and with vigorous impression on the eye, giving even the leaves of their bushes and grass with perfect edge and shape, they proceeded into the distance with equal attention to what they could see of its details—they gave all that the eye can perceive in a distance, when it is fully and entirely devoted to it, and therefore, though masters of aerial tone, though employing every expedient that art could supply to conceal the intersection of lines, though caricaturing the force and shadow of near objects to throw them

§ 5. Which not being done by the old masters, they could not express space.

* This incapacity of the eye must not be confounded with its incapability to comprehend a large portion of *lateral* space at once. We indeed can see, at any one moment, little more than one point, the objects beside it being confused and indistinct ; but we need pay no attention to this in art, because we can see just as little of the picture as we can of the landscape without turning the eye, and hence any slurring or confusing of one part of it, laterally, more than another, is not founded on any truth of nature, but is an expedient of the artist—and often an excellent and desirable one—to make the eye rest where he wishes it. But as the touch expressive of a distant object is as near upon the canvas as that expressive of a near one, both are seen distinctly and with the same focus of the eye, and hence an immediate contradiction of nature results, unless one or other be given with an artificial and increased indistinctness, expressive of the appearance peculiar to the unadapted focus. On the other hand, it must be noted that the greater part of the effect above described is consequent not on variation of focus, but on the different angle at which near objects are seen by each of the two eyes, when both are directed towards the distance.

close upon the eye, they *never* succeeded in truly representing space. Turner introduced a new era in landscape art, by showing that the foreground might be sunk for the distance, and that it was possible to express immediate proximity to the spectator, without giving anything like completeness to the forms of the near objects. This is not done by slurred or soft lines, observe, (always the sign of vice in art.) but by a decisive imperfection, a firm, but partial assertion of form, which the eye feels indeed to be close home to it, and yet cannot rest upon, or cling to, nor entirely understand, and from which it is driven away of necessity, to those parts of distance on which it is intended to repose. And this principle, originated by Turner, though fully carried out by him only, has yet been acted on with judgment and success by several less powerful artists of the English school. Some six years ago, the brown moorland foregrounds of Copley Fielding were very instructive in this respect. Not a line in them was made out, not a single object clearly distinguishable. Wet broad sweeps of the brush, sparkling, careless, and accidental as nature herself, always truthful as far as they went, implying knowledge, though not expressing it, suggested everything, while they represented nothing. But far off into the mountain distance came the sharp edge and the delicate form; the whole intention and execution of the picture being guided and exerted where the great impression of space and size was to be given. The spectator was compelled to go forward into the waste of hills—there, where the sun broke wide upon the moor, he must walk and wander—he could not stumble and hesitate over the near rocks, nor stop to botanize on the first inches of his path.* And the impression of these pictures was always great and enduring, as it was simple and truthful. I do not know anything in art which has expressed more completely the force and feeling of nature in these particular scenes. And it is a farther illustra-

* There is no inconsistency, observe, between this passage and what was before asserted respecting the necessity of botanical fidelity—where the foreground is the object of attention. Compare Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII. § 10:—"To paint mist rightly, space rightly, and light rightly, it may be often necessary to paint *nothing else* rightly."

tion * of the principle we are insisting upon, that where, as in some of his later works, he has bestowed more labor on the foreground, the picture has lost both in space and sublimity. And among artists in general, who are either not aware of the principle, or fear to act upon it, (for it requires no small courage, as well as skill, to treat a foreground with that indistinctness and mystery which they have been accustomed to consider as characteristic of distance,) the foreground is not only felt, as every landscape painter will confess, to be the most embarrassing and unmanageable part of the picture, but, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, will go near to destroy the effect of the rest of the composition. Thus Callcott's Trent is severely injured by the harsh group of foreground figures ; and Stanfield very rarely gets through an Academy picture without destroying much of its space, by too much determination of near form ; while Harding constantly sacrifices his distance, and compels the spectator to dwell on the foreground altogether, though indeed, with such foregrounds as he gives us, we are most happy so to do. But it

§ 7. Especially of
Turner.

is in Turner only that we see a bold and decisive choice of the distance and middle distance, as his great object of attention ; and by him only that the foreground is united and adapted to it, not by any want of drawing, or coarseness, or carelessness of execution, but by the most precise and beautiful indication or suggestion of just so much of even the minutest forms as the eye can see when its focus is not adapted to them. And herein is another reason for the vigor and wholeness of the effect of Turner's works at any distance ; while those of almost all other artists are sure to lose space as soon as we lose sight of the details.

And now we see the reason for the singular, and to the ignorant in art, the offensive execution of Turner's figures. I do not mean to assert that there is any reason whatsoever, for *bad* drawing. (though in landscape it matters exceedingly little ;) but that there is both reason and necessity for that *want* of drawing which gives even the nearest figures round balls with four pink spots in

§ 8. Justification
of the want of
drawing in
Turner's figures.

* Hardly. It would have been so only had the recently finished foregrounds been as accurate in detail as they are abundant : they are painful, I believe, not from their finish, but their falseness.

them instead of faces, and four dashes of the brush instead of hands and feet ; for it is totally impossible that if the eye be adapted to receive the rays proceeding from the utmost distance, and some partial impression from all the distances, it should be capable of perceiving more of the forms and features of *near* figures than Turner gives. And how absolutely necessary to the faithful representation of space this indecision really is, might be proved with the utmost ease by any one who had veneration enough for the artist to sacrifice one of his pictures to his fame ; who would take some one of his works in which the figures were most incomplete, and have them painted in by any of our delicate and first-rate figure-painters, absolutely preserving every color and shade of Turner's group, so as not to lose one atom of the composition, but giving eyes for the pink spots, and feet for the white ones. Let the picture be so exhibited in the Academy, and even novices in art would feel at a glance that its truth of space was gone, that every one of its beauties and harmonies had undergone decomposition, that it was now a grammatical solecism, a painting of impossibilities, a thing to torture the eye, and offend the mind.

CHAPTER V.

OF TRUTH OF SPACE :—SECONDLY, AS ITS APPEARANCE IS
DEPENDENT ON THE POWER OF THE EYE.

IN the last chapter, we have seen how indistinctness of individual distances becomes necessary in order to express the adaptation of the eye to one or other of them ; we have now to

examine that kind of indistinctness which is dependent on real retirement of the object even when the focus of the eye is fully concentrated upon it.

The first kind of indecision is that which belongs to all objects which the eye is not adapted to, whether near or far off : the second is that consequent upon the want of power in the eye to receive a clear image of objects at a great distance from it, however attentively it may regard them.

Draw on a piece of white paper, a square and a circle, each about a twelfth or eighth of an inch in diameter, and blacken them so that their forms may be very distinct : place your paper against the wall at the end of the room, and retire from it a greater or less distance according as you have drawn the figures larger or smaller. You will come to a point where, though you can see both the spots with perfect plainness, you cannot tell which is the square and which the circle.

Now this takes place of course with every object in a landscape, in proportion to its distance and size. The definite forms of the leaves of a tree, however sharply and separately they may

appear to come against the sky, are quite indistinguishable at fifty yards off, and the form of everything becomes confused before we finally lose sight of it.

Now if the character of an object, say the front of a house, be explained by a variety of forms in it, as the shadows in the tops of the windows, the lines of the architraves, the seams of the masonry, etc. ; these lesser details, as the object falls into distance, become confused and undecided, each of them losing

§ 1. The peculiar indistinctness dependent on the retirement of objects from the eye.

§ 2. Causes confusion, but not annihilation of details.

their definite forms, but all being perfectly visible as something, a white or a dark spot or stroke, not lost sight of, observe, but yet so seen that we cannot tell what they are. As the distance increases, the confusion becomes greater, until at last the whole front of the house becomes merely a flat, pale space, in which, however, there is still observable a kind of richness and checkering, caused by the details in it, which, though totally merged and lost in the mass, have still an influence on the texture of that mass ; until at last the whole house itself becomes a mere light or dark spot which we can plainly see, but cannot tell what it is, nor distinguish it from a stone or any other object.

Now what I particularly wish to insist upon, is the state of vision in which all the details of an object are seen, and yet seen in such confusion and disorder that we cannot in the least tell what they are, or what they mean. It is not mist
§ 3. Instances in various objects. between us and the object, still less is it shade, still less is it want of character ; it is a confusion, a mystery, an interfering of undecided lines with each other, not a diminution of their number ; window and door, architrave and frieze, all are there : it is no cold and vacant mass, it is full and rich and abundant, and yet you cannot see a single form so as to know what it is. Observe your friend's face as he is coming up to you ; first it is nothing more than a white spot ; now it is a face, but you cannot see the two eyes, nor the mouth, even as spots ; you see a confusion of lines, a something which you know from experience to be indicative of a face, and yet you cannot tell how it is so. Now he is nearer, and you can see the spots for the eyes and mouth, but they are not blank spots neither ; there is detail in them ; you cannot see the lips, nor the teeth, nor the brows, and yet you see more than mere spots ; it is a mouth and an eye, and there is light and sparkle and expression in them, but nothing distinct. Now he is nearer still, and you can see that he is like your friend, but you cannot tell whether he is or not ; there is a vagueness and indecision of line still. Now you are sure, but even yet there are a thousand things in his face which have their effect in inducing the recognition, but which you cannot see so as to know what they are.

Changes like these, and states of vision corresponding to them, take place with each and all of the objects of nature, and

two great principles of truth are deducible from their observation. First, place an object as close to the eye as

§ 4. Two great resultant truths; that nature is never distinct, and never vacant.

you like, there is always something in it which you *cannot* see, except in the hinted and mysterious manner above described. You can see the texture of a piece of dress, but you cannot see the individual threads which compose it, though they are all felt, and have each of them influence on the eye. Secondly, place an object as far from the eye as you like, and until it becomes itself a mere spot, there is always something in it which you *can* see, though only in the hinted manner above described. Its shadows and lines and local colors are not lost sight of as it retires; they get mixed and indistinguishable, but they are still there, and there is a difference always perceivable between an object possessing such details and a flat or vacant space. The grass blades of a meadow a mile off, are so far discernible that there will be a marked difference between its appearance and that of a piece of wood painted green. And thus nature is never distinct and never vacant, she is always mysterious, but always abundant; you always see something, but you never see all.

And thus arise that exquisite finish and fulness which God has appointed to be the perpetual source of fresh pleasure to the cultivated and observant eye,—a finish which no distance can render invisible, and no nearness comprehensible; which in every stone, every bough, every cloud, and every wave is multiplied around us, forever presented, and forever exhaustless. And hence in art, every space or touch in which we can see everything, or in which we can see nothing, is false. Nothing can be true which is either complete or vacant; every touch is false which does not suggest more than it represents, and every space is false which represents nothing.

Now, I would not wish for any more illustrative or marked examples of the total contradiction of these two great principles, than the landscape works of the old masters, taken as a body:—

the Dutch masters furnishing the cases of seeing everything, and the Italians of seeing nothing.

§ 5. Complete violation of both these principles by the old masters. They are either distinct or vacant.

The rule with both is indeed the same, differently applied. “You shall see the bricks in the wall, and be able to count them, or you shall see nothing but

a dead flat ;” but the Dutch give you the bricks, and the Italians the flat. Nature’s rule being the precise reverse—“ You shall never be able to count the bricks, but you shall never see a dead space.”

Take, for instance, the street in the centre of the really great landscape of Poussin (great in feeling at least) marked 260 in the Dulwich Gallery. The houses are dead square masses with a light side and a dark side, and black touches for windows. There is no suggestion of anything in any of the spaces, the light wall is dead gray, the dark wall dead gray, and the windows dead black. How differently would nature have treated us. She would have let us see the Indian corn hanging on the walls, and the image of the Virgin at the angles, and the sharp, broken, broad shadows of the tiled eaves, and the deep ribbed tiles with the doves upon them, and the carved Roman capital built into the wall, and the white and blue stripes of the mattresses stuffed out of the windows, and the flapping corners of the mat blinds. All would have been there ; not as such, not like the corn, nor blinds, nor tiles, not to be comprehended nor understood, but a confusion of yellow and black spots and strokes, carried far too fine for the eye to follow, microscopic in its minuteness, and filling every atom and part of space with mystery, out of which would have arranged itself the general impression of truth and life.

Again, take the distant city on the right bank of the river in Claude’s Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, in the National Gallery. I have seen many cities in my life, and drawn not a few ;

and I have seen many fortifications, fancy ones included, which frequently supply us with very new ideas indeed, especially in matters of proportion ; but I do not remember ever having met with either a city or a fortress *entirely* composed of round towers of various heights and sizes, all fac-similes of each other, and absolutely agreeing in the number of battlements. I have, indeed, some faint recollection of having delineated such an one in the first page of a spelling-book when I was four years old : but, somehow or other, the dignity and perfection of the ideal were not appreciated, and the volume was not considered to be increased in value by the frontispiece. Without, however, venturing to doubt the entire sublimity of

§ 6. Instances
from Nicholas
Poussin.

§ 7. From Claude.

the same ideal as it occurs in Claude, let us consider how nature, if she had been fortunate enough to originate so perfect a conception, would have managed it in its details. Claude has permitted us to see every battlement, and the first impulse we feel upon looking at the picture is to count how many there are. Nature would have given us a peculiar confused roughness of the upper lines, a multitude of intersections and spots, which we should have known from experience was indicative of battlements, but which we might as well have thought of creating as of counting. Claude has given you the walls below in one dead void of uniform gray. There is nothing to be seen, nor felt, nor guessed at in it; it is gray paint or gray shade, whichever you may choose to call it, but it is nothing more. Nature would have let you see, nay, would have compelled you to see, thousands of spots and lines, not one to be absolutely understood or accounted for, but yet all characteristic and different from each other; breaking lights on shattered stones, vague shadows from waving vegetation, irregular stains of time and weather, mouldering hollows, sparkling casements—all would have been there—none, indeed, seen as such, none comprehensible or like themselves, but all visible; little shadows, and sparkles, and scratches, making that whole space of color a transparent, palpitating, various infinity.

Or take one of Poussin's extreme distances, such as that in the Sacrifice of Isaac. It is luminous, retiring, delicate and perfect in tone, and is quite complete enough to deceive and delight the careless eye to which all distances are alike; nay, it is perfect and masterly, and absolutely right if we consider it as a sketch,—as a first plan of a distance, afterwards to be carried out in detail. But we must remember that all these alternate spaces of gray and gold are not the landscape itself, but the treatment of it—not its substance, but its light and shade. They are just what nature would cast over it, and write upon it with every cloud, but which she would cast in play, and without carefulness, as matters of the very smallest possible importance. All her work and her attention would be given to bring out from underneath this, and through this, the forms and the material character which this can only be valuable to illustrate, not to conceal. Every one of those broad spaces she

§ 8. And G.
Poussin.

would linger over in protracted delight, teaching you fresh lessons in every hairsbreadth of it, and pouring her fulness of invention into it, until the mind lost itself in following her,—now fringing the dark edge of the shadow with a tufted line of level forest—now losing it for an instant in a breath of mist—then breaking it with the white gleaming angle of a narrow brook—then dwelling upon it again in a gentle, mounded, melting undulation, over the other side of which she would carry you down into a dusty space of soft, crowded light, with the hedges, and the paths, and the sprinkled cottages and scattered trees mixed up and mingled together in one beautiful, delicate, impenetrable mystery—sparkling and melting, and passing away into the sky, without one line of distinctness, or one instant of vacancy.

Now it is, indeed, impossible for the painter to follow all this—he cannot come up to the same degree and order of infinity—but he can give us a lesser kind of infinity. He has not one-thousandth part of the space to occupy which nature has ; but he can, at least, leave no part of that space vacant and unprofitable. If nature carries out her minutiae over miles, he has no excuse for generalizing in inches. And if he will only give us all he can, if he will give us a fulness as complete and as mysterious as nature's, we will pardon him for its being the fulness of a cup instead of an ocean. But we will not pardon him, if, because he has not the mile to occupy, he will not occupy the inch, and because he has fewer means at his command, will leave half of those in his power unexerted. Still less will we pardon him for mistaking the sport of nature for her labor, and for following her only in her hour of rest, without observing how she has worked for it. After spending centuries in raising the forest, and guiding the river, and modelling the mountain, she exults over her work in buoyancy of spirit, with playful sunbeam and flying cloud ; but the painter must go through the same labor, or he must not have the same recreation. Let him chisel his rock faithfully, and tuft his forest delicately, and then we will allow him his freaks of light and shade, and thank him for them ; but we will not be put off with the play before the lesson

§ 9. The imperative necessity, in landscape painting, of fulness and finish.

—with the adjunct instead of the essence—with the illustration instead of the fact.

I am somewhat anticipating my subject here, because I can scarcely help answering the objections which I know must arise in the minds of most readers, especially of those who are *partially* § 10. Breadth is not vacancy. artistic, respecting “generalization,” “breadth,” “effect,” etc. It were to be wished that our writers on art would not dwell so frequently on the necessity of breadth, without explaining what it means; and that we had more constant reference made to the principle which I can only remember having seen once clearly explained and insisted on,—that breadth is not vacancy. Generalization is unity, not destruction of parts; and composition is not annihilation, but arrangement of materials. The breadth which unites the truths of nature with her harmonies, is meritorious and beautiful; but the breadth which annihilates those truths by the million, is not painting nature, but painting over her. And so the masses which result from right concords and relations of details, are sublime and impressive; but the masses which result from the eclipse of details are contemptible and painful.* And we shall show, in following parts of the work, that distances like those of Poussin are mere meaningless tricks of clever execution, which, when once discovered, the artist may repeat over and over again, with mechanical contentment and perfect satisfaction, both to himself and to his superficial admirers, with no more exertion of intellect nor awakening of feeling than any tradesman has in multiplying some ornamental pattern of furniture. Be this as it may, however, (for we cannot enter upon the discussion of the question here,) the falsity and imperfection of such distances admit of no dispute. Beautiful and ideal they may be; true they are not: and in the same way we might go through every part and portion of the works of the old masters, showing throughout, either that you have every leaf and blade of grass staring defiance to the mystery of nature, or that you have dead spaces of

* Of course much depends upon the kind of detail so lost. An artist may generalize the trunk of a tree, where he only loses lines of bark, and do us a kindness; but he must not generalize the details of a champaign, in which there is a history of creation. The full discussion of the subject belongs to a future part of our investigation.

absolute vacuity, equally determined in their denial of her fullness. And even if we ever find (as here and there, in their better pictures, we do) changeful passages of agreeable playing color, or mellow and transparent modulations of mysterious atmosphere, even here the touches, though satisfactory to the eye, are suggestive of nothing,—they are characterless,—they have none of the peculiar expressiveness and meaning by which nature maintains the variety and interest even of what she most conceals. She always tells a story, however hinted and vaguely; each of her touches is different from all the others; and we feel with every one, that though we cannot tell what it is, it cannot be *anything*; while even the most dexterous distances of the old masters pretend to secrecy without having anything to conceal, and are ambiguous, not from the concentration of meaning, but from the want of it.

And now, take up one of Turner's distances, it matters not which, or of what kind,—drawing or painting, small or great, done thirty years ago, or for last year's Academy, as you like; say that of the Mercury and Argus, and look if every fact which I have just been pointing out in nature be not carried out in it. Abundant, beyond the power of the eye to embrace or follow, vast and various, beyond the power of the mind to comprehend, there is yet not one atom in its whole extent and mass which does not suggest more than it represents; nor does it suggest vaguely, but in such a manner as to prove that the conception of each individual inch of that distance is absolutely clear and complete in the master's mind, a separate picture fully worked out: but yet, clearly and fully as the idea is formed, just so much of it is given, and no more, as nature would have allowed us to feel or see; just so much as would enable a spectator of experience and knowledge to understand almost every minute fragment of separate detail, but appears, to the unpractised and careless eye, just what a distance of nature's own would appear, an unintelligible mass. Not one line out of the millions there is without meaning, yet there is not one which is not affected and disguised by the dazzle and indecision of distance. No form is made out, and yet no form is unknown.

Perhaps the truth of this system of drawing is better to be

§ 11. The fulness
and mystery of
Turner's distances.

understood by observing the distant character of rich architecture, than of any other object. Go to the top of Highgate Hill on a clear summer morning at five o'clock, and look at Westminster Abbey. You will receive an impression of a building enriched with multitudinous vertical lines. Try to distinguish one of those lines all the way down from the one next to it: You cannot. Try to count them: You cannot. Try to make out the beginning or end of any one of them: You cannot. Look at it generally, and it is all symmetry and arrangement. Look at its parts, and it is all inextricable confusion. Am not I, at this moment, describing a piece of Turner's drawing, with the same words by which I describe nature? And what would one of the old masters have done with such a building as this in his distance? Either he would only have given the shadows of the buttresses, and the light and dark sides of the two towers, and two dots for the windows; or if more ignorant and more ambitious, he had attempted to render some of the detail, it would have been done by distinct lines,—would have been broad caricature of the delicate building, felt at once to be false, ridiculous, and offensive. His most successful effort would only have given us, through his carefully toned atmosphere, the effect of a colossal parish church, without one line of carving on its economic sides. Turner, and Turner only, would follow and render on the canvas that mystery of decided line,—that distinct, sharp, visible, but unintelligible and inextricable richness, which, examined part by part, is to the eye nothing but confusion and defeat, which, taken as a whole, is all unity, symmetry, and truth.*

Nor is this mode of representation true only with respect to distances. Every object, however near the eye, has something about it which you cannot see, and which brings the mystery of distance even into every part and portion of what we suppose ourselves to see most distinctly. Stand in the Piazza di St. Marco at Venice, as close to

§ 12. Farther illustrations in architectural drawing.

§ 13. In near objects as well as distances.

* Vide, for illustration, Fontainebleau, in the Illustrations to Scott; Vignette at opening of Human Life, in Rogers's Poems; Venice, in the Italy; Chateau de Blois; the Rouen, and Pont Neuf, Paris, in the Rivers of France. The distances of all the Academy pictures of Venice, especially the Shylock, are most instructive.

the church as you can, without losing sight of the top of it. Look at the capitals of the columns on the second story. You see that they are exquisitely rich, carved all over. Tell me their patterns : You cannot. Tell me the direction of a single line in them : You cannot. Yet you see a multitude of lines, and you have so much feeling of a certain tendency and arrangement in those lines, that you are quite sure the capitals are beautiful, and that they are all different from each other. But

§ 11. Vacancy
and falsehood of
Canaletto.

I defy you to make out one single line in any one of them. Now go to Canaletto's painting of this church, in the Palazzo Manfrini, taken from the very spot on which you stood. How much has he represented of all this? A black dot under each capital for the shadow, and a yellow one above it for the light. There is not a vestige nor indication of carving or decoration of any sort or kind.

Very different from this, but erring on the other side, is the ordinary drawing of the architect, who gives the principal lines of the design with delicate clearness and precision, but with no uncertainty or mystery about them ; which mystery being removed, all space and size are destroyed with it, and we have a drawing of a model, not of a building. But in the capital lying on the foreground in Turner's *Daphne hunting with Leucippus*, we have the perfect truth. Not one jag of the acanthus leaves is absolutely visible, the lines are all disorder, but you feel in an instant that all are there. And so it will invariably be found through every portion of detail in his late and most perfect works.

But if there be this mystery and inexhaustible finish merely in the more delicate instances of architectural decoration, how much more in the ceaseless and incomparable decoration of nature. The detail of a single weedy bank laughs

§ 15. Still greater
fulness and finish
in landscape fore-
grounds.

the carving of ages to scorn. Every leaf and stalk has a design and tracery upon it,—every knot of grass an intricacy of shade which the labor of years could never imitate, and which, if such labor could follow it out even to the last fibres of the leaflets, would yet be falsely represented, for, as in all other cases brought forward, it is not clearly seen, but confusedly and mysteriously. That which is nearness for the bank, is distance for its details ; and however near it may be,

the greater part of those details are still a beautiful incomprehensibility.*

* It is to be remembered, however, that these truths present themselves in all probability under very different phases to individuals of different powers of vision. Many artists who appear to generalize rudely or rashly are perhaps faithfully endeavoring to render the appearance which nature bears to sight of limited range. Others may be led by their singular keenness of sight into inexpedient detail. Works which are painted for effect at a certain distance must be always seen at disadvantage by those whose sight is of different range from the painter's. Another circumstance to which I ought above to have alluded is the scale of the picture ; for there are different degrees of generalization, and different necessities of symbolism, belonging to every scale : the stipple of the miniature painter would be offensive on features of the life size, and the leaves with Tintoret may articulate on a canvas of sixty feet by twenty-five, must be generalized by Turner on one of four by three. Another circumstance of some importance is the assumed distance of the foreground ; many landscape painters seem to think their nearest foreground is always equally near, whereas its distance from the spectator varies not a little, being always at least its own calculable breadth from side to side as estimated by figures or any other object of known size at the nearest part of it. With Claude almost always ; with Turner often, as in the *Daphne and Leucippus*, this breadth is forty or fifty yards ; and as the nearest foreground object *must* then be at least that distance removed, and *may* be much more, it is evident that no completion of close detail is in such cases allowable, (see here another proof of Claude's erroneous practice ;) with Titian and Tintoret, on the contrary, the foreground is rarely more than five or six yards broad, and its objects therefore being only five or six yards distant are entirely detailed.

None of these circumstances, however, in any wise affect the great principle, the confusion of detail taking place sooner or later in all cases. I ought to have noted, however, that many of the pictures of Turner in which the confused drawing has been least understood, have been luminous *twilights* ; and that the uncertainty of twilight is therefore added to that of general distance. In the evenings of the south it not unfrequently happens that objects touched with the reflected light of the western sky, continue even for the space of half an hour after sunset, glowing, ruddy, and intense in color, and almost as bright as if they were still beneath actual sunshine, even till the moon begins to cast a shadow : but in spite of this brilliancy of color all the details become ghostly and ill-defined. This is a favorite moment of Turner's, and he invariably characterizes it, not by gloom, but by uncertainty of detail. I have never seen the effect of clear twilight thoroughly rendered by art ; that effect in which all details are lost, while intense clearness and light are still felt in the atmosphere, in which nothing is distinctly seen, and yet it is not darkness, far less mist, that is the cause of concealment. Turner's efforts at rendering this effect (as the *Wilderness of En*

Hence, throughout the picture, the expression of space and size is dependent upon obscurity, united with, or rather resultant from, exceeding fulness. We destroy both space and size, either by the vacancy, which affords us no measure of space, or by the distinctness, which gives us a false one. The distance of Poussin, having no indication of trees, nor of meadows, nor of character of any kind, may be fifty miles off, or may be five; we cannot tell—we have no measure, and in consequence, no vivid impression. But a middle distance of Hobbima's involves a contradiction in terms; it states a distance by perspective, which it contradicts by distinctness of detail.

§ 16. Space and size are destroyed alike by distinctness and by vacancy.

A single dusty roll of Turner's brush is more truly expressive of the infinity of foliage, than the niggling of Hobbima could have rendered his canvas, if he had worked on it till doomsday.

§ 17. Swift execution best secures perfection of details.

What Sir J. Reynolds says of the misplaced labor of his Roman acquaintance on separate leaves of foliage, and the certainty he expresses that a man who attended to general character would in five minutes produce a more faithful representation of a tree, than the unfortunate mechanist in as many years, is thus perfectly true and well founded; but this is not because details are undesirable, but because they are best given by swift execution, and because, individually, they cannot be given at all. But it should be observed (though we shall be better able to insist upon this point in future) that much of harm and error has arisen from the supposition

§ 18. Finish is far more necessary in landscape than in historical subjects.

and assertions of swift and brilliant historical painters, that the same principles of execution are entirely applicable to landscape, which are right for the figure. The artist who falls into extreme detail in drawing the human form, is apt to become disgusting rather than pleasing. It is more agreeable that the general outline and soft hues of flesh should alone be given, than its hairs, and veins, and lines of intersection. And even the most rapid and generalizing expression of the human body,

(gedi, Assos, Chateau de Blois, Caer-laverock, and others innumerable,) have always some slight appearance of mistiness, owing to the indistinctness of details; but it remains to be shown that any closer approximation to the effect is possible.

if directed by perfect knowledge, and rigidly faithful in drawing, will commonly omit very little of what is agreeable or impressive. But the exclusively generalizing landscape painter omits the whole of what is valuable in his subject,—omits thoughts, designs, and beauties by the million, everything, indeed, which can furnish him with variety or expression. A distance in Lincolnshire, or in Lombardy, might both be generalized into such blue and yellow stripes as we see in Poussin ; but whatever there is of beauty or character in either, depends altogether on our understanding the details, and feeling the difference between the morasses and ditches of the one, and the rolling sea of mulberry trees of the other. And so in every part of the subject. I have no hesitation in asserting that it is *impossible* to go too fine, or think too much about details in landscape, so that they be rightly arranged and rightly massed ; but that it is equally impossible to render anything like the fulness or the space of nature, except by that mystery and obscurity of execution which she herself uses, and in which Turner only has followed her.

We have now rapidly glanced at such general truths of nature as can be investigated without much knowledge of what is beautiful. Questions of arrangement, massing, and generalization,

§ 19. Recapitulation of the section.

I prefer leaving untouched, until we know something about details, and something about what is beautiful. All that is desirable, even in these mere technical and artificial points, is based upon truths and habits of nature ; but we cannot understand those truths until we are acquainted with the specific forms and minor details which they affect, or out of which they arise. I shall, therefore, proceed to examine the invaluable and essential truths of specific character and form—briefly and imperfectly, indeed, as needs must be, but yet at length sufficient to enable the reader to pursue, if he will, the subject for himself.

SECTION III.

OF TRUTH OF SKIES.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE OPEN SKY.

It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident

purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or

§ 1. The peculiar adaptation of the sky to the pleasing and teaching of man.

essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organization ; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great ugly black rain cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few ; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them, he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he be always with them ; but the sky is for all ; bright as it is, it is not “ too bright, nor good, for human nature’s daily food ;”

it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for the soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together ; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us, is as distinct, as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing

§ 2. The carelessness with which its lessons are received.

to what is mortal is essential. And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought,

but as it has to do with our animal sensations ; we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than to brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intention of the Supreme, that we are to receive more from the covering vault than the light and the dew which we share with the weed and the worm, only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accident, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of ? One says it has been wet, and another it has been windy, and another it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday ? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain ? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves ? All has passed, unregretted as unseen ; or if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary ; and yet it

§ 3. The most essential of these lessons are the gentlest.

is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest

characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lampblack and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, and the calm, and the perpetual,—that which must be sought

ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood,—things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally, which are never wanting, and never repeated, which are to be found always yet each found but once ; it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given. These are what the artist of highest aim must study ; it

§ 4. Many of our ideas of sky altogether conventional. is these, by the combination of which his ideal is to be created ; these, of which so little notice is ordinarily taken by common observers, that I fully

believe, little as people in general are concerned with art, more of their ideas of sky are derived from pictures than from reality, and that if we could examine the conception formed in the minds of most educated persons when we talk of clouds, it would frequently be found composed of fragments of blue and white reminiscences of the old masters.

I shall enter upon the examination of what is true in sky at greater length, because it is the only part of a picture of which all, if they will, may be competent judges. What I may have to assert respecting the rocks of Salvator, or the boughs of Claude, I can scarcely prove, except to those whom I can immure for a month or two in the fastnesses of the Apennines, or guide in their summer walks again and again through the ravines of Sorrento. But what I say of the sky can be brought to an immediate test by all, and I write the more decisively, in the hope that it may be so.

Let us begin then with the simple open blue of the sky. This is of course the color of the pure atmospheric air, not the aqueous vapor, but the pure azote and oxygen, and it is the total color of the whole mass of that air between

§ 5. Nature and essential qualities of the open blue. us and the void of space. It is modified by the varying quantity of aqueous vapor suspended in it,

whose color, in its most imperfect, and therefore most visible, state of solution, is pure white, (as in steam,) which receives, like any other white, the warm hues of the rays of the sun, and, according to its quantity and imperfect solution, makes the sky paler, and at the same time more or less gray, by mixing warm tones with its blue. This gray aqueous vapor, when very decided, becomes mist, and when local, cloud. Hence the sky is to be considered as a transparent blue liquid, in which, at

various elevations, clouds are suspended, those clouds being themselves only particular visible spaces of a substance with which the whole mass of this liquid is more or less impregnated.

§ 6. Its connection with clouds. Now, we all know this perfectly well, and yet we so far forget it in practice, that we little notice the constant connection kept up by nature between her blue and her clouds, and we are not offended by the constant habit of the old masters, of considering the blue sky as totally distinct in its nature, and far separated from the vapors which float in it. With them, cloud is cloud, and blue is blue, and no kind of connection between them is ever hinted at. The sky is thought of as a clear, high material dome, the clouds as separate bodies, suspended beneath it, and in consequence, however delicate and

§ 7. Its exceeding depth. exquisitely removed in tone their skies may be, you always look *at* them, not *through* them. Now, if there be one characteristic of the sky more valuable or necessary to be rendered than another, it is that which Wordsworth has given in the second book of the Excursion :—

“ The chasm of sky above my head
Is Heaven’s profoundest azure. No domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds, to occupy,
Or to pass through ;—but rather an *abyss*
In which the everlasting stars abide,
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.”

And, in his American Notes, I remember Dickens notices the same truth, describing himself as lying drowsily on the barge deck, looking not at, but *through* the sky. And if you look intensely at the pure blue of a serene sky, you will see that there is a variety and fulness in its very repose. It is not flat dead color, but a deep, quivering, transparent body of penetrable air, in which you trace or imagine short, falling spots of deceiving light, and dim shades, faint, veiled vestiges of dark vapor ; and

§ 8. These qualities are especially given by modern masters. it is this trembling transparency which our great modern master has especially aimed at and given.

His blue is never laid on in smooth coats, but in breaking, mingling, melting hues, a quarter of an inch of which, cut off from all the rest of the picture, is still *spacious*, still infinite and immeasurable in depth. It is a painting of the

air, something into which you can see, through the parts which are near you into those which are far off ; something which has no surface, and through which we can plunge far and farther, and without stay or end, into the profundity of space ;—whereas, with all the old landscape painters, except Claude, you may indeed go a long way before you come to the sky, but you will strike hard against it at last. A perfectly genuine and un-

§ 9. And by touched sky of Claude is indeed most perfect, and Claude. beyond praise, in all qualities of air ; though even

with him, I often feel rather that there is a great deal of pleasant air between me and the firmament, than that the firmament itself is only air. I do not mean, however, to say a word against such skies as that of the Enchanted Castle, or that marked 30 in the National Gallery, or one or two which I remember at Rome ; but how little and by how few these fine passages of Claude are appreciated, is sufficiently proved by the sufferance of such villainous and unpalliated copies as we meet with all over Europe, like the Marriage of Isaac, in our own Gallery, to remain under his name. In fact, I do not remember above ten pictures of Claude's, in which the skies, whether repainted or altogether copies, or perhaps from Claude's hand, but carelessly laid in, like that marked 241, Dulwich Gallery, were not fully as feelingless and false as those of other masters ; while, with the Poussins, there are no favorable exceptions. Their skies are systematically wrong ; take, for instance, the sky of the Sacrifice of Isaac. It is here high noon, as is shown by the shadow of the figures ; and what sort of color is the sky

§ 10. Total ab- at the top of the picture ? Is it pale and gray
sence of them in
Poussin. Physical with heat, full of sunshine, and unfathomable in
errors in his depth ? On the contrary, it is of a pitch of dark-
general treatment
of open sky. ness which, except on the Mont Blanc or Chim

borazo, is as purely impossible as color can be. He might as well have painted it coal black ; and it is laid on with a dead coat of flat paint, having no one quality or resemblance of sky about it. It cannot have altered, because the land horizon is as delicate and tender in tone as possible, and is evidently unchanged ; and to complete the absurdity of the whole thing, this color holds its own, without graduation or alteration, to within three or four degrees of the horizon, where it suddenly

becomes bold and unmixed yellow. Now the horizon at noon may be yellow when the whole sky is covered with dark clouds, and only *one* open streak of light left in the distance from which the whole light proceeds ; but with a clear, open sky, and opposite the sun, at noon, such a yellow horizon as this is physically impossible. Even supposing that the upper part of the sky were pale and warm, and that the transition from the one hue to the other were effected imperceptibly and gradually, as is invariably the case in reality, instead of taking place within a space of two or three degrees ;—even then, this gold yellow would be altogether absurd ; but as it is, we have in this sky (and it is a fine picture—one of the best of Gaspar’s that I know,) a notable example of the truth of the old masters—two impossible colors impossibly united ! Find such a color in Turner’s noonday zenith as the blue at the top, or such a color at a noonday horizon as the yellow at the bottom, or such a connection of any colors whatsoever as that in the centre, and then you may talk about his being false to nature if you will. Nor is this a solitary instance ; it is Gaspar Poussin’s favorite and characteristic effect. I remember twenty such, most of them worse than this, in the downright surface and opacity of

§ 11. Errors of
Cuyp in graduation
of color.

blue. Again, look at the large Cuyp in the Dulwich Gallery, which Mr. Hazlitt considers the “ finest in the world,” and of which he very complimentarily says, “ The tender green of the valleys, the gleaming lake, the purple light of the hills, have an effect like the *down* on an unripe nectarine !” I ought to have apologized before now, for not having studied sufficiently in Covent Garden to be provided with terms of correct and classical criticism. One of my friends begged me to observe, the other day, that Claude was “ pulpy ;” another added the yet more gratifying information that he was “ juicy ;” and it is now happily discovered that Cuyp is “ downy.” Now I dare say that the sky of this first-rate Cuyp is very like an unripe nectarine : all that I have to say about it is, that it is exceedingly unlike a sky. The blue remains unchanged and ungraduated over three-fourths of it, down to the horizon ; while the sun, in the left-hand corner, is surrounded with a halo, first of yellow, and then of crude pink, both being separated from each other, and the

last from the blue, as sharply as the belts of a rainbow, and both together not ascending ten degrees in the sky. Now it is difficult to conceive how any man calling himself a painter could impose such a thing on the public, and still more how the public can receive it, as a representation of that sunset purple which invariably extends its influence to the zenith, so that there is no pure blue anywhere, but a purple increasing in purity gradually down to its point of greatest intensity, (about forty-five degrees from the horizon,) and then melting imperceptibly into the gold, the three colors extending their influence over the whole sky; so that throughout the whole sweep of the heaven, there is no one spot where the color is not in an equal state of transition—passing from gold into orange, from that into rose, from that into purple, from that into blue, with absolute equality of change, so that in no place can it be said, “here it changes,” and in no place, “here it is unchanging.” This is invariably the case. There is no such thing—there never was, and never will be such a thing, while God’s heaven remains as it is made—as a serene, sunset sky, with its purple and rose in *belts* about the sun.

Such bold, broad examples of ignorance as these would soon set aside all the claims of the professed landscape painters to truth, with whatever delicacy of color or manipulation they may be disguised. But there are some skies, of the Dutch school, in which clearness and coolness have been aimed at, instead of depth; and some introduced merely as backgrounds to the historical subjects of the older Italians, which there is no matching in modern times; one would think angels had painted them, for all is now clay and oil in comparison. It seems as if we had totally lost the art, for surely otherwise, however little our painters might aim at it or feel it, they would touch the chord sometimes by accident; but they never do, and the mechanical incapacity is still more strongly evidenced by the muddy struggles of the unhappy Germans, who have the feeling, partially strained, artificial, and diseased, indeed, but still genuine enough to bring out the tone, if they had the mechanical means and technical knowledge. But, however they were obtained, the clear tones of this kind of the older Italians are

§ 12. The exceeding value of the skies of the early Italian and Dutch schools. Their qualities are unattainable in modern times.

glorious and enviable in the highest degree ; and we shall show, when we come to speak of the beautiful, that they are one of the most just grounds of the fame of the old masters.

But there is a series of phenomena connected with the open blue of the sky, which we must take especial notice of, as it is of constant occurrence in the works of Turner and Claude, the effects, namely, of visible sunbeams. It will be necessary for us thoroughly to understand the circumstances under which such effects take place.

§ 13. Phenomena of visible sunbeams. Their nature and cause.

Aqueous vapor or mist, suspended in the atmosphere, becomes visible exactly as dust does in the air of a room. In the shadows you not only cannot see the dust itself, because unilluminated, but you can see other objects through the dust without obscurity, the air being thus actually rendered more transparent by a deprivation of light. Where a sunbeam enters, every particle of dust becomes visible, and a palpable interruption to the sight, so that a transverse sunbeam is a real obstacle to the vision, you cannot see things clearly through it.

In the same way, wherever vapor is illuminated by transverse rays, there it becomes visible as a whiteness more or less affecting the purity of the blue, and destroying it exactly in proportion to the degree of illumination. But where vapor is in shade, it has very little effect on the sky, perhaps making it a little deeper and grayer than it otherwise would be, but not itself, unless very dense, distinguishable or felt as mist.

The appearance of mist or whiteness in the blue of the sky, is thus a circumstance which more or less accompanies sunshine, and which, supposing the quantity of vapor constant, is greatest in the brightest sunlight. When there are no clouds in the sky, the whiteness, as it affects the whole sky equally, is not particularly noticeable. But when there are clouds between us and the sun, the sun being low, those clouds cast shadows along and through the mass of suspended vapor. Within the space of these shadows, the vapor, as above stated, becomes transparent and invisible, and the sky appears of a pure blue. But where the sunbeams strike, the vapor becomes visible in the form of the beams, occasioning those radiating shafts of light which are one of the most valuable and constant accom-

§ 14. They are only illuminated mist, and cannot appear when the sky is free from vapor, nor when it is without clouds.

paniments of a low sun. The denser the mist, the more distinct and sharp-edged will these rays be ; when the air is very clear, they are mere vague, flushing, gradated passages of light ; when it is very thick, they are keen-edged and decisive in a high degree.

We see then, first, that a quantity of mist dispersed through the whole space of the sky, is necessary to this phenomenon ; and secondly, that what we usually think of as beams of greater brightness than the rest of the sky, are in reality only a part of that sky in its natural state of illumination, cut off and rendered brilliant by the shadows from the clouds,—that these shadows are in reality the source of the appearance of beams,—that, therefore, no part of the sky can present such an appearance, except when there are broken clouds between it and the sun ; and lastly, that the shadows cast from such clouds are not necessarily gray or dark, but very nearly of the natural pure blue of a sky destitute of vapor.

Now, as it has been proved that the appearance of beams can only take place in a part of the sky which has clouds between it and the sun, it is evident that no appearance of beams can ever begin from the orb itself, except when there is a cloud or solid body of some kind between us and it ; but that such appearances will almost invariably begin on the dark side of some of the clouds around it, the orb itself remaining the centre of a broad blaze of united light. Wordsworth has given us in two lines, the only circumstances under which rays can ever appear to have origin in the orb itself :—

§ 15. Erroneous tendency in the representation of such phenomena by the old masters.

“ But rays of light,
Now suddenly diverging from the orb,
Retired behind the mountain tops, or veiled
By the dense air, shot upwards.”

EXCURSION, Book IX.

And Turner has given us the effect magnificently in the Dartmouth of the River Scenery. It is frequent among the old masters, and constant in Claude : though the latter, from drawing his beams too fine, represents the effect upon the dazzled eye rather than the light which actually exists, and approximates very closely to the ideal which we see in the sign of the Rising

Sun ; nay, I am nearly sure that I remember cases in which he has given us the diverging beam, without any cloud or hill interfering with the orb. It may, perhaps, be some-

§ 16. The ray which appears in the dazzled eye should not be represented. what difficult to say how far it is allowable to represent that kind of ray which is seen by the

dazzled eye. It is very certain that we never look towards a bright sun without seeing glancing rays issue from it ; but it is equally certain that those rays are no more real existences than the red and blue circles which we see after having been so dazzled, and that if we are to represent the rays we ought also to cover our sky with pink and blue circles. I should on the whole consider it utterly false in principle to represent the visionary beam, and that we ought only to show

§ 17. The practice of Turner. His keen perception of the more delicate phenomena of rays. that which has actual existence. Such we find to be the constant practice of Turner. Even where, owing to interposed clouds, he has beams appearing to issue from the orb itself, they are broad

bursts of light, not spiky rays ; and his more usual practice is to keep all near the sun in one simple blaze of intense light, and from the first clouds to throw beams to the zenith, though he often does not permit any appearance of rays until close to the zenith itself. Open at the 80th page of the Illustrated edition of Rogers's poems. You have there a sky blazing with sunbeams ; but they all begin a long way from the sun, and they are accounted for by a mass of dense clouds surrounding the orb itself. Turn to the 7th page. Behind the old oak, where the sun is supposed to be, you have only a blaze of undistinguished light ; but up on the left, over the edge of the cloud, on its dark side, the sunbeam. Turn to page 192,—blazing rays again, but all beginning where the clouds do, not one can you trace to the sun ; and observe how carefully the long shadow on

§ 18. The total absence of any evidence of such perception in the works of the old masters. the mountain is accounted for by the dim dark promontory projecting out near the sun. I need not multiply examples ; you will find various modifications and uses of these effects throughout his

works. But you will not find a single trace of them in the old masters. They give you the rays issuing from behind black clouds, and because they are a coarse and common effect which could not possibly escape their observation, and because they are

easily imitated. They give you the spiky shafts issuing from the orb itself, because these are partially symbolical of light, and assist a tardy imagination, as two or three rays scratched round the sun with a pen would, though they would be rays of darkness instead of light.* But of the most beautiful phenomenon of all, the appearance of the delicate ray far in the sky, threading its way among the thin, transparent clouds, while all around the sun is unshadowed fire, there is no record nor example whatsoever in their works. It was too delicate and spiritual for them; probably their blunt and feelingless eyes never perceived it in nature, and their untaught imaginations were not likely to originate it in the study.

Little is to be said of the skies of our other landscape artists. In paintings, they are commonly toneless, crude, and wanting in depth and transparency; but in drawings, some very perfect and delicate examples have been produced by various members of the old water color Society, and one or two others; but with respect to the qualities of which we are at present speaking, it is not right to compare drawings with paintings, as the wash or spunging, or other artifices peculiar to water color, are capable of producing an appearance of quality which it needs much higher art to produce in oils.

Taken generally, the open skies of the moderns are inferior in quality to picked and untouched skies of the greatest of the

§ 19. Truth of the
skies of modern
drawings.

* I have left this passage as it stood originally, because it is right as far as it goes; yet it speaks with too little respect of symbolism, which is often of the highest use in religious art, and in some measure is allowable in all art. In the works of almost all the greatest masters there are portions which are explanatory rather than representative, and typical rather than imitative: nor could these be parted with but at infinite loss. Note, with respect to the present question, the daring black sunbeams of Titian, in his woodcut of St. Francis receiving the stigmata, and compare here Part III. Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 18; Chap. V. § 13. And though I believe that I am right in considering all such symbolism as out of place in pure landscape, and in attributing that of Claude to ignorance or inability, and not to feeling, yet I praise Turner not so much for his absolute refusal to represent the spiky ray about the sun, as for his perceiving and rendering that which Claude never perceived, the multitudinous presence of radiating light in the upper sky and on all its countless ranks of subtile cloud.

ancients, but far superior to the average class of pictures which we have every day fathered upon their reputation. § 20. *Recapitulation.* The best skies of the ancients are, in quality, inimitable, but in rendering of various truth, childish. Nine or ten skies of Claude might be named which are not to be contended with, in their way, and as many of Cuyp. Teniers has given some very wonderful passages, and the clearness of the early Italian and Dutch schools is beyond all imitation. But the common blue daubing which we hear every day in our best galleries attributed to Claude and Cuyp, and the genuine skies of Salvator, and of both the Poussins, are not to be compared for an instant with the best works of modern times, even in quality and transparency ; while in all matters requiring delicate observation or accurate science,—in all which was not attainable by technicalities of art, and which depended upon the artist's knowledge and understanding of nature, all the works of the ancients are alike the productions of mere children, sometimes manifesting great sensibility, but proving at the same time, feebly developed intelligence and ill-regulated observation

CHAPTER II.

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS :—FIRST, OF THE REGION OF THE CIRRUS.

OUR next subject of investigation must be the specific character of clouds, a species of truth which is especially neglected by artists ; first, because as it is within the limits of possibility that a cloud may assume almost any form, it is difficult to point out, and not always easy to feel, where in error consists ; and secondly, because it is totally impossible to study the forms of clouds from nature with care and accuracy, as a change in the subject takes place between every touch of the following pencil, and parts of an outline sketched at different instants cannot harmonize, nature never having intended them to come together. Still if artists were more in the habit of sketching clouds rapidly, and as accurately as possible in the outline, from nature, instead of daubing down what they call “ effects ” with the brush, they would soon find there is more beauty about their forms than can be arrived at by any random felicity of invention, however brilliant, and more essential character than can be violated without incurring the charge of falsehood,—falsehood as direct and definite, though not as traceable as error in the less varied features of organic form.

The first and most important character of clouds, is dependent on the different altitudes at which they are formed. The atmosphere may be conveniently considered as divided into three spaces, each inhabited by clouds of specific character altogether different, though, in reality, there is no distinct limit fixed between them by nature, clouds being formed at *every* altitude, and partaking according to their altitude, more or less of the characters of the upper or lower regions. The scenery of the sky is thus formed of an infinitely graduated series of systematic forms of cloud, each of which has its own

§ 1. Difficulty of ascertaining wherein the truth of clouds consists.

§ 2. Variation of their character at different elevations. The three regions to which they may conveniently be considered as belonging.

region in which alone it is formed, and each of which has specific characters which can only be properly determined by comparing them as they are found clearly distinguished by intervals of considerable space. I shall therefore consider the sky as divided into three regions—the upper region, or region of the cirrus; the central region, or region of the stratus; the lower region, or the region of the rain-cloud.

The clouds which I wish to consider as included in the upper region, never touch even the highest mountains of Europe, and may therefore be looked upon as never formed below an elevation of at least 15,000 feet; they are the motion-

§ 3. Extent of the upper region. less multitudinous lines of delicate vapor with which the blue of the open sky is commonly streaked or speckled after several days of fine weather. I must be pardoned for giving a detailed description of their specific characters as they are of constant occurrence in the works of modern artists, and I shall have occasion to speak frequently of them in future parts of the work. Their chief characters are—first,

§ 4. The symmetrical arrangement of its clouds. Symmetry: They are nearly always arranged in some definite and evident order, commonly in long ranks reaching sometimes from the zenith to the horizon, each rank composed of an infinite number of transverse bars of about the same length, each bar thickest in the middle, and terminating in a traceless vaporous point at each side; the ranks are in the direction of the wind, and the bars of course at right angles to it; these latter are commonly slightly bent in the middle. Frequently two systems of this kind, indicative of two currents of wind, at different altitudes intersect one another, forming a network. Another frequent arrangement is in groups of excessively fine, silky, parallel fibres, commonly radiating, or having a tendency to radiate, from one of their extremities, and terminating in a plummy sweep at the other:—these are vulgarly known as “mares’ tails.” The plummy and expanded extremity of these is often bent upwards, sometimes back and up again, giving an appearance of great flexibility and unity at the same time, as if the clouds were tough, and would hold together however bent. The narrow extremity is invariably turned to the wind, and the fibres are parallel with its direction. The upper clouds always fall into some modification

of one or other of these arrangements. They thus differ from all other clouds, in having a plan and system ; whereas other clouds, though there are certain laws which they cannot break, have yet perfect freedom from anything like a relative and general system of government. The upper clouds are to the lower, what soldiers on parade are to a mixed multitude ; no men walk on their heads or their hands, and so there are certain laws which no clouds violate ; but there is nothing except in the upper clouds resembling symmetrical discipline.

Secondly, Sharpness of Edge : The edges of the bars of the upper clouds which are turned to the wind, are often the sharpest which the sky shows ; no outline whatever of any other kind of cloud, however marked and energetic, ever approaches the delicate decision of these edges. The outline of a black thunder-cloud is striking, from the great energy of the color or shade of the general mass ; but as a line, it is soft and indistinct, compared with the edge of the cirrus, in a clear sky with a brisk breeze. On the other hand, the edge of the bar turned away from the wind is always soft, often imperceptible, melting into the blue interstice between it and its next neighbor. Commonly the sharper one edge is, the softer is the other, and the clouds look flat, and as if they slipped over each other like the scales of a fish. When both edges are soft, as is always the case when the sky is clear and windless, the cloud looks solid, round, and fleecy.

Thirdly, Multitude : The delicacy of these vapors is sometimes carried into such an infinity of division, that no other sensation of number that the earth or heaven can give is so impressive. Number is always most felt when it is symmetrical, (vide Burke on " Sublime," Part ii. sect. 8,) and, therefore, no sea-waves nor fresh leaves make their number so evident or so impressive as these vapors. Nor is nature content with an infinity of bars or lines alone—each bar is in its turn severed into a number of small undulatory masses, more or less connected according to the violence of the wind. When this division is merely effected by undulation, the cloud exactly resembles sea-sand ribbed by the tide ; but when the division amounts to real separation we have the mottled or mackerel skies. Commonly, the greater the division of

§ 5. Their exceeding delicacy.

§ 6. Their number.

its bars, the broader and more shapeless is the rank or field, so that in the mottled sky it is lost altogether, and we have large irregular fields of equal size, masses like flocks of sheep; such clouds are three or four thousand feet below the legitimate cirrus. I have seen them cast a shadow on the Mont Blanc at sunset, so that they must descend nearly to within fifteen thousand feet of the earth.

Fourthly, Purity of Color : The nearest of these clouds—those over the observer's head, being at least three miles above him, and nearly all entering the ordinary sphere of vision, farther from him still,—their dark sides are much

§ 7. Causes of their peculiarly delicate coloring. grayer and cooler than those of other clouds, owing to their distance. They are composed of

the purest aqueous vapor, free from all foulness of earthy gases, and of this in the lightest and most ethereal state in which it can be, to be visible. Farther, they receive the light of the sun in a state of far greater intensity than lower objects, the beams being transmitted to them through atmospheric air far less dense, and wholly unaffected by mist, smoke, or any other impurity. Hence their colors are more pure and vivid, and their white less sullied than those of any other clouds.

Lastly, Variety : Variety is never so conspicuous, as when it is united with symmetry. The perpetual change of form in other clouds, is monotonous in its very dissimilarity, nor is

§ 8. Their variety of form. difference striking where no connection is implied; but if through a range of barred clouds,

crossing half the heaven, all governed by the same forces and falling into one general form, there be yet a marked and evident dissimilarity between each member of the great mass—one more finely drawn, the next more delicately moulded, the next more gracefully bent—each broken into differently modelled and variously numbered groups, the variety is doubly striking, because contrasted with the perfect symmetry of which it forms a part. Hence, the importance of the truth, that nature never lets one of the members of even her most disciplined groups of cloud be like another; but though each is adapted for the same function, and in its great features resembles all the others, not one, out of the millions with which the sky is checkered, is without a separate beauty and character, appearing to have had

distinct thought occupied in its conception, and distinct forces in its production ; and in addition to this perpetual invention, visible in each member of each system, we find systems of separate cloud intersecting one another, the sweeping lines mingled and interwoven with the rigid bars, these in their turn melting into banks of sand-like ripple and flakes of drifted and irregular foam : under all, perhaps the massy outline of some lower cloud moves heavily across the motionless buoyancy of the upper lines, and indicates at once their elevation and their repose.

Such are the great attributes of the upper cloud region ; whether they are beautiful, valuable, or impressive, it is not our present business to decide, nor to endeavor to discover the rea-

§ 9. Total absence of even the slightest effort at their representation, in ancient landscape.

son of the somewhat remarkable fact, that the whole field of ancient landscape art affords, as far as we remember, but one instance of any effort whatever to represent the character of this cloud

region. That one instance is the landscape of Rubens in our own gallery, in which the mottled or fleecy sky is given with perfect truth and exquisite beauty. To this should perhaps be added, some of the backgrounds of the historical painters, where horizontal lines were required, and a few level bars of white or warm color cross the serenity of the blue. These, as far as they go, are often very perfect, and the elevation and repose of their effect might, we should have thought, have pointed out to the landscape painters that there was something (I do not say much, but certainly something) to be made out of the high clouds. Not one of them, however, took the hint. To whom, among them all, can we look for the slightest realization of the fine and faithful descriptive passage of the "Excursion," already alluded to :—

" But rays of light,
Now suddenly diverging from the orb,
Retired behind the mountain tops, or veiled
By the dense air, shot upwards to the crown
Of the blue firmament—aloft—and wide :
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
Through their ethereal texture, had become
Vivid as fire,—Clouds separately poised,

Innumerable multitude of forms
 Scattered through half the circle of the sky ;
 And giving back, and shedding each on each,
 With prodigal communion, the bright hues
 Which from the unapparent fount of glory
 They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
 That which the heavens displayed the liquid deep
 Repeated, but with unity sublime."

There is but one master whose works we can think of while we read this ; one alone has taken notice of the neglected upper sky ; it is his peculiar and favorite field ; he has watched its every modification, and given its every phase and feature ; at all hours, in all seasons, he has followed its passions and its changes, and has brought down and laid open to the world another apocalypse of heaven.

§ 10. The intense
 and constant
 study of them by
 Turner.

There is scarcely a painting of Turner's, in which serenity of sky and intensity of light are aimed at together, in which these clouds are not used, though there are not two cases in which they are used altogether alike. Sometimes they are crowded together in masses of mingling light, as in the *Shylock* ; every part and atom sympathizing in that continuous expression of slow movement which Shelley has so beautifully touched :—

" Underneath the young gray dawn
 A multitude of dense, white fleecy clouds,
 Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind."

At other times they are blended with the sky itself, felt only here and there by a ray of light calling them into existence out of its misty shade, as in the *Mercury and Argus* ; sometimes, where great repose is to be given, they appear in a few detached, equal, rounded flakes, which seem to hang motionless, each like the shadow of the other, in the deep blue of the zenith, as in the *Acro-Corinth* ; sometimes they are scattered in fiery flying fragments, each burning with separate energy, as in the *Temeraire* ; sometimes woven together with fine threads of intermediate darkness, melting into the blue as in the *Napoleon*. But in all cases the exquisite manipulation of the master gives to each atom of the multitude its own character and

expression. Though they be countless as leaves, each has its portion of light, its shadow, its reflex, its peculiar and separating form.

Take for instance the illustrated edition of Rogers's Poems,* and open it at the 80th page, and observe how every attribute which I have pointed out in the upper sky, is there rendered with the faithfulness of a mirror ; the long lines of parallel bars, the delicate curvature from the wind, which the inclination of the sail shows you to be from the west ; the excessive sharpness of every edge which is turned to the wind, the faintness of every opposite one, the breaking up of each bar into rounded masses, and finally, the inconceivable variety with which individual form has been given to every member of the multitude, and not only individual form, but roundness and substance even where there is scarcely a hairbreadth of cloud to express it in. Observe, above everything, the varying indication of space and depth in the whole, so that you may look through and through from one cloud to another, feeling not merely how they retire to the horizon, but how they melt back into the recesses of the sky ; every interval being filled with absolute air, and all its spaces so melting and fluctuating, and fraught with change as with repose, that as you look, you will fancy that the rays shoot higher and higher into the vault of light, and that the pale streak of horizontal vapor is melting away from the cloud that it crosses. Now watch for the next barred sunrise, and take this vignette to the window, and test it by nature's own clouds, among which you will find forms and passages, I do not say merely *like*, but apparently the actual originals of parts of this very drawing. And with whom will you do this, except with Turner? Will you do it with Claude, and set that blank square yard of blue, with its round, white, flat fixtures of similar cloud, beside the purple infinity of nature, with her countless multitude of shadowy lines, and flaky waves, and folded veils of variable mist? Will you do it with Poussin, and set those massy steps of unyielding solidity,

* I use this work frequently for illustration, because it is the only one I know in which the engraver has worked with delicacy enough to give the real forms and touches of Turner. I can reason from these plates, (in questions of form only,) nearly as well as I could from the drawings.

§11. His vignette,
Sunrise on the
Sea.

with the chariot-and-four driving up them, by the side of the delicate forms which terminate in threads too fine for the eye to follow them, and of texture so thin woven that the earliest stars shine through them? Will you do it with Salvator, and set that volume of violent and restless manufactory smoke beside those calm and quiet bars, which pause in the heaven as if they would never leave it more?

Now we have just seen how Turner uses the sharp-edged cirri when he aims at giving great transparency of air. But it was shown in the preceding chapter that sunbeams, or the appearance of them, are always sharper in their edge in proportion as the air is more misty, as they are most defined in a room where there is most dust

§ 12. His use of the cirrus in expressing mist.

flying about in it. Consequently, in the vignette we have been just noticing, where transparency is to be given, though there is a blaze of light, its beams are never edged; a tendency to rays is visible, but you cannot in any part find a single marked edge of a rising sunbeam, the sky is merely more flushed in one place than another. Now let us see what Turner does when he wants mist. Turn to the Alps at Daybreak, page 193, in the same book. Here we have the cirri used again, but now they have no sharp edges, they are all fleecy and mingling with each other, though every one of them has the most exquisite indication of individual form, and they melt back, not till they are lost in exceeding light, as in the other plate, but into a mysterious, fluctuating, shadowy sky, of which, though the light penetrates through it all, you perceive every part to be charged with vapor. Notice particularly the half-indicated forms even where it is most serene, behind the snowy mountains. And now, how are the sunbeams drawn? no longer indecisive, flushing, palpitating, every one is sharp and clear, and terminated by definite shadow; note especially the marked lines on the upper cloud; finally, observe the difference in the mode of indicating the figures, which are here misty and indistinguishable, telling only as shadows, though they are near and large, while those in the former vignette came clear upon the eye, though they were so far off as to appear mere points.

Now is this perpetual consistency in all points, this concentration of every fact which can possibly bear upon what we are

to be told, this watchfulness of the entire meaning and system of nature, which fills every part and space of the picture with coincidences of witness, which come out upon us, as they would from the reality, more fully and deeply in proportion to the knowledge we possess and the attention we give, admirable or not? I could go on writing page after page on every sky of Turner's, and pointing out fresh truths in every one. In the Havre, for instance, of the Rivers of France we have a new fact pointed out to us with respect to these cirri, namely, their being so faint and transparent as not to be distinguishable from the blue of the sky, (a frequent case,) except in the course of a sunbeam, which, however, does not illumine their edges, they being not solid enough to reflect light, but penetrates their whole substance, and renders them flat, luminous forms in its path, instantly and totally lost at its edge. And thus a separate essay would be required by every picture, to make fully understood the new phenomena which it treated and illustrated. But after once showing what are the prevailing characteristics of these clouds, we can only leave it to the reader to trace them wherever they occur. There are some fine and characteristic passages of this kind of cloud given by Stanfield, though he dares not use them in multitude, and is wanting in those refined qualities of form which it is totally impossible to explain in words, but which, perhaps, by simple outlines, on a large scale, selected from the cloud forms of various artists, I may in following portions of the work illustrate with the pencil.

Of the colors of these clouds I have spoken before, (Sec. I. Chap. II.) but though I then alluded to their purity and vividness, I scarcely took proper notice of their variety: there is indeed in nature variety in all things, and it would be absurd to insist on it in each case, yet the colors of these clouds are so marvellous in their changefulness, that they require particular notice. If you watch for the next sunset, when there are a considerable number of these cirri in the sky, you will see, especially at the zenith, that the sky does not remain of the same color for two inches together; one cloud has a dark side of cold blue, and a fringe of milky white; another, above it, has a dark side of purple and an edge of red;

§ 13. His consistency in every minor feature.

§ 14. The color of the upper clouds.

another, nearer the sun, has an under-side of orange and an edge of gold ; these you will find mingled with, and passing into the blue of the sky, which in places you will not be able to distinguish from the cool gray of the darker clouds, and which will be itself full of gradation, now pure and deep, now faint and feeble ; and all this is done, not in large pieces, nor on a large scale, but over and over again in every square yard, so that there is no single part nor portion of the whole sky which has not in itself variety of color enough for a separate picture, and yet no single part which is like another, or which has not some peculiar source of beauty, and some peculiar arrangement of color of its own. Now, instead of this, you get in the old masters—Cuyp, or Claude, or whoever they may be—a field of blue, delicately, beautifully, and uniformly shaded down to the yellow sun, with a certain number of similar clouds, each with a dark side of the same gray, and an edge of the same yellow. I do not say that nature never does anything like this, but I say that her *principle* is to do a great deal more, and that what she does more than this,—what I have above described, and what you may see in nine sunsets out of ten,—has been observed, attempted, and rendered by Turner only, and by him with a fidelity and force which presents us with more essential truth, and more clear expression and illustration of natural laws, in every wreath of vapor, than composed the whole stock of heavenly information, which lasted Cuyp and Claude their lives.

We close then our present consideration of the upper clouds, to return to them when we know what is beautiful ; we have at present only to remember that of these clouds, and the truths connected with them, none before Turner had taken any notice whatsoever ; that had they therefore been even feebly and imperfectly represented by him, they would yet have given him a claim to be considered more extended and universal in his statement of truths than any of his predecessors ; how much more when we find that deep fidelity in his studied and perfect skies which opens new sources of delight to every advancement of our knowledge, and to every added moment of our contemplation.

CHAPTER III.

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS :—SECONDLY, OF THE CENTRAL CLOUD REGION.

WE have next to investigate the character of the Central Cloud Region, which I consider as including all clouds which are the usual characteristic of ordinary serene weather, and which touch and envelop the mountains of Switzerland, but never affect those of our own island ; they may therefore be considered as occupying a space of air ten thousand feet in height, extending from five to fifteen thousand feet above the sea.

These clouds, according to their elevation, appear with great variety of form, often partaking of the streaked or mottled character of the higher region, and as often, when the precursors of storm, manifesting forms closely connected with the lowest rain clouds ; but the species especially characteristic of the central region is a white, ragged, irregular, and scattered vapor, which has little form and less color, and of which a good example may be seen in the largest landscape of Cuyp, in the Dulwich Gallery. When this vapor collects into masses, it is partially rounded, clumsy, and ponderous, as if it would tumble out of the sky, shaded with a dull gray, and totally devoid of any appearance of energy or motion. Even in nature, these clouds are comparatively uninteresting, scarcely worth raising

our heads to look at ; and on canvas, valuable only as a means of introducing light, and breaking the monotony of blue ; yet they are, perhaps, beyond all others the favorite clouds of the Dutch masters. Whether they had any motive for the adoption of such materials, beyond the extreme facility with which acres of canvas might thus be covered without any troublesome exertion of thought ; or any temptation to such selections beyond the impossibility of error where nature

§ 1. Extent and typical character of the central cloud region.

§ 2. Its characteristic clouds, requiring no attention nor thought for their representation, are therefore favorite subjects with the old masters.

shows no form, and the impossibility of deficiency where she shows no beauty, it is not here the place to determine. Such skies are happily beyond the reach of criticism, for he who tells you nothing cannot tell you a falsehood. A little flake-white, glazed with a light brush over the carefully toned blue, permitted to fall into whatever forms chance might determine, with the single precaution that their edges should be tolerably irregular, supplied, in hundreds of instances, a sky quite good enough for all ordinary purposes — quite good enough for cattle to graze, or boors to play at nine-pins under — and equally devoid of all that could gratify, inform, or offend.

But although this kind of cloud is, as I have said, typical of the central region, it is not one which nature is fond of. She scarcely ever lets an hour pass without some manifestation

§ 3. The clouds of finer forms, sometimes approaching the upper cirri, sometimes the lower cumulus. And then in Poussin.

the lower outlines, we have the nearest approximation which nature ever presents to the clouds of Claude, Salvator, and Poussin, to the characters of which I must request especial attention, as it is here only that we shall have a fair opportunity of comparing their skies with those of the modern school. I shall, as before, glance rapidly at the great laws of specific form, and so put it in the power of the reader to judge for himself of the truth of representation.

Clouds, it is to be remembered, are not so much local vapor, as vapor rendered locally visible by a fall of temperature. Thus a cloud, whose parts are in constant motion, will hover on a

§ 4. Their essential characters. snowy mountain, pursuing constantly the same track upon its flanks, and yet remaining of the same size, the same form, and in the same place, for half a day together. No matter how violent or how capricious the wind may be, the instant it approaches the spot where the chilly influence of the snow extends, the moisture it carries becomes visible, and then and there the cloud forms on the instant, apparently maintaining its form against the wind, though the careful and keen eye can see all its parts in the most rapid motion across the mountain. The outlines of such a cloud are of course not determined by the irregular impulses of the wind, but by the fixed lines of radiant heat which regulate the tem-

perature of the atmosphere of the mountain. It is terminated, therefore, not by changing curves, but by steady right lines of more or less decision, often exactly correspondent with the outline of the mountain on which it is formed, and falling therefore into grotesque peaks and precipices. I have seen the marked and angular outline of the Grandes Jorasses, at Chamounix, mimicked in its every jag by a line of clouds above it. Another resultant phenomenon is the formation of cloud in the calm air to leeward of a steep summit ; cloud whose edges are in rapid motion, where they are affected by the current of the wind above, and stream from the peak like the smoke of a volcano, yet always vanish at a certain distance from it as steam issuing from a chimney. When wet weather of some duration is approaching, a small white spot of cloud will sometimes appear low on the hill flanks ; it will not move, but will increase gradually for some little time, then diminish, still without moving ; disappear altogether, reappear ten minutes afterwards, exactly in the same spot ; increase to a greater extent than before, again disappear, again return, and at last permanently ; other similar spots of cloud forming simultaneously, with various fluctuations, each in its own spot, and at the same level on the hill-side, until all expand, join together, and form an unbroken veil of threatening gray, which darkens gradually into storm. What in such cases takes place palpably and remarkably, is more or less a law of formation in all clouds whatsoever ; they being bounded rather by lines expressive of changes of temperature in the atmosphere, than by the impulses of the currents of wind in which those changes take place. Even when in rapid and visible motion across the sky, the variations which take place in their outlines are not so much alterations of position and arrangement of parts, as they are the alternate formation and disappearance of parts. There is, therefore, usually a parallelism and consistency in their great outlines, which give system to the smaller curves of which they are composed ; and if these great lines be taken, rejecting the minutiae of variation, the resultant form will almost always be angular, and full of character and decision. In the flock-like fields of equal masses, each individual mass has the effect, not of an ellipse or circle,

§ 5. Their angular forms and general decision of outline.

but of a rhomboid ; the sky is crossed and checkered, not honeycombed : in the lower cumuli, even though the most rounded of all clouds, the groups are not like balloons or bubbles, but like towers or mountains. And the result of this arrangement in masses more or less angular, varied with, and chiefly constructed of, curves of the utmost freedom and beauty, is that appearance of exhaustless and fantastic energy which gives every cloud a marked character of its own, suggesting resemblances to the specific outlines of organic objects. I do not say that such accidental resemblances are a character to be imitated ; but merely that they bear witness to the originality and vigor of separate conception in cloud forms, which give to the scenery of the sky a force and variety no less delightful than that of the changes of mountain outline in a hill district of great elevation ; and that there is added to this a spirit-like feeling, a capricious, mocking imagery of passion and life, totally different from any effects of inanimate form that the earth can show.

The minor contours, out of which the larger outlines are composed, are indeed beautifully curvilinear ; but they are never monotonous in their curves. First comes a concave line, then a convex one, then an angular jag, breaking off into spray, then a downright straight line, then a curve again, then a deep gap, and a place where all is lost and melted away, and so on ; displaying in every inch of the form renewed and ceaseless invention, setting off grace with rigidity, and relieving flexibility with force, in a manner scarcely less admirable, and far more changeful than even in the muscular forms of the human frame. Nay, such is the exquisite composition of all this, that you may take any single fragment of any cloud in the sky, and you will find it put together as if there had been a year's thought over the plan of it, arranged with the most studied inequality—with the most delicate symmetry—with the most elaborate contrast, a picture in itself. You may try every other piece of cloud in the heaven, and you will find them every one as perfect, and yet not one in the least like another.

Now it may perhaps, for anything we know, or have yet proved, be highly expedient and proper, in art, that this variety,

individuality, and angular character should be changed into a mass of convex curves, each precisely like its neighbor in all respects, and unbroken from beginning to end;—it may be highly original, masterly, bold, whatever you choose to call it; but it is *false*. I do not take upon me to assert that the clouds which in ancient Germany were more especially and peculiarly devoted to the business of catching princesses off desert islands, and carrying them to enchanted castles, might not have possessed something of the pillowy organization which we may suppose best adapted for functions of such delicacy and dispatch. But I do mean to say that the clouds which God sends upon his earth as the ministers of dew, and rain, and shade, and with which he adorns his heaven, setting them in its vault for the thrones of his spirits, have not in one instant or atom of their existence, one feature in common with such conceptions and creations. And there are, beyond dispute, more direct and unmitigated falsehoods told, and more laws of nature set at open defiance in *one* of the “rolling” skies of Salvator, such as that marked 159 in the Dulwich Gallery, than were ever attributed, even by the ignorant and unfeeling, to all the wildest flights of Turner put together.

And it is not as if the error were only occasional. It is systematic and constant in all the Italian masters of the seventeenth century, and in most of the Dutch. They looked at clouds as at everything else which did not particularly help them in their great end of deception, with utter carelessness and bluntness of feeling,—saw that there were a great many rounded passages in them,—found it much easier to sweep circles than to design beauties, and sat down in their studies, contented with perpetual repetitions of the same spherical conceptions, having about the same relation to the clouds of nature, that a child’s carving of a turnip has to the head of the Apollo. Look at the round things about the sun in the brickly Claude, the smallest of the three Seaports in the National Gallery. They are a great deal more like half-crowns than clouds. Take the ropy, tough-looking wreath in the Sacrifice of Isaac, and find one part of it, if you can, which is not the repetition of every other part

§ 7. Their characters, as given by S. Rosa.

§ 8. Monotony and falsehood of the clouds of the Italian School generally.

of it, all together being as round and rapid as the brush could draw them ; or take the two cauliflower-like protuberances in No. 220 of the Dulwich Gallery, and admire the studied similarity between them ; you cannot tell which is which ; or take the so-called Nicholas Poussin, No. 212, Dulwich Gallery, in which, from the brown trees to the right-hand side of the picture, there is not one line which is not physically impossible.

But it is not the outline only which is thus systematically false. The drawing of the solid form is worse still, for it is to be remembered that although clouds of course arrange them-

§ 9. Vast size
of congregated
masses of cloud.

selves more or less into broad masses, with a light side and dark side, both their light and shade are invariably composed of a series of divided masses, each of which has in its outline as much variety and character as the great outline of the cloud ; presenting, therefore, a thousand times repeated, all that I have described as characteristic of the general form. Nor are these multitudinous divisions a truth of slight importance in the character of sky, for they are dependent on, and illustrative of, a quality which is usually in a great degree overlooked,—the enormous retiring spaces of solid clouds. Between the illumined edge of a heaped cloud, and that part of its body which turns into shadow, there will generally be a clear distance of several miles, more or less of course, according to the general size of the cloud, but in such large masses as in Poussin and others of the old masters, occupy the fourth or fifth of the visible sky ; the clear illumined breadth of vapor, from the edge to the shadow, involves at least a distance of five or six miles. We are little apt, in watching

§ 10. Demonstra-
ble by compari-
son with moun-
tain ranges.

the changes of a mountainous range of cloud, to reflect that the masses of vapor which compose it, are huger and higher than any mountain range of the earth ; and the distances between mass and mass are not yards of air traversed in an instant by the flying form, but valleys of changing atmosphere leagues over ; that the slow motion of ascending curves, which we can scarcely trace, is a boiling energy of exulting vapor rushing into the heaven a thousand feet in a minute ; and that the toppling angle whose sharp edge almost escapes notice in the multitudinous forms around it, is a nodding precipice of storms, 3000 feet from base to summit.

It is not until we have actually compared the forms of the sky with the hill ranges of the earth, and seen the soaring Alp overtopped and buried in one surge of the sky, that we begin to conceive or appreciate the colossal scale of the phenomena of the latter. But of this there can be no doubt in the mind of any one accustomed to trace the forms of clouds among hill ranges—as it is there a demonstrable and evident fact, that the space of vapor visibly extended over an ordinarily cloudy sky, is not less, from the point nearest to the observer to the horizon, than twenty leagues; that the size of every mass of separate form, if it be at all largely divided, is to be expressed in terms of *miles*; and that every boiling heap of illuminated mist in the nearer sky, is an enormous mountain, fifteen or twenty thousand feet in height, six or seven miles over an illuminated surface, furrowed by a thousand colossal ravines, torn by local tempests into peaks and promontories, and changing its features with the majestic velocity of the volcano.

To those who have once convinced themselves of these proportions of the heaven, it will be immediately evident, that though we might, without much violation of truth, omit the minor divisions of a cloud four yards over, it is the veriest audacity of falsehood to omit those of masses where for yards we have to read miles; first, because it is physically impossible that such a space should be without many and vast divisions; secondly, because divisions at such distances must be sharply and forcibly marked by aerial perspective, so that not only they must be there, but they must be visible and evident to the eye; and thirdly, because these multitudinous divisions are absolutely necessary, in order to express this space and distance, which cannot but be fully and imperfectly felt, even with every aid and evidence that art can give of it.

Now if an artist taking for his subject a chain of vast mountains, several leagues long, were to unite all their varieties of ravine, crag, chasm, and precipice, into one solid, unbroken mass, with one light side and one dark side, looking like a white ball or parallelopiped two yards broad, the words “breadth,” “boldness,” or, “generalization,” would scarcely be received as a sufficient apology for a

§ 11. And consequent divisions and varieties of feature.

§ 12. Not lightly to be omitted.

proceeding so glaringly false, and so painfully degrading. But when, instead of the really large and simple forms of mountains, united, as they commonly are, by some great principle of common organization, and so closely resembling each other as often to correspond in line, and join in effect; when instead of this, we have to do with spaces of cloud twice as vast, broken up into a multiplicity of forms necessary to, and characteristic of, their very nature—those forms subject to a thousand local changes, having no association with each other, and rendered visible in a thousand places by their own transparency or cavities, where the mountain forms would be lost in shade,—that this far greater space, and this far more complicated arrangement, should be all summed up into one round mass, with one swell of white, and one flat side of unbroken gray, is considered an evidence of the sublimest powers in the artist of generalization and breadth. Now it may be broad, it may be grand, it may be beautiful, artistical, and in every way desirable. I don't say it is not—I merely say it is a concentration of every kind of falsehood: it is depriving heaven of its space, clouds of their buoyancy, winds of their motion, and distance of its blue.

This is done, more or less, by all the old masters, without an exception.* Their idea of clouds was altogether similar; more

§ 13. Imperfect conceptions of this size and extent in ancient landscape.

or less perfectly carried out, according to their power of hand and accuracy of eye, but universally the same in conception. It was the idea of a comparatively small, round, puffed-up white body, irregularly associated with other round and puffed-up white bodies, each with a white light side, and a gray dark side, and a soft reflected light, floating a great way below a blue dome. Such is the idea of a cloud formed by most people; it is the first, general, uncultivated notion of what we see every day. People think of the clouds as about as large as they look—forty yards over, perhaps; they see generally that they are solid bodies subject to the same laws as other solid bodies, roundish, whitish, and apparently suspended a great way under a high blue concavity. So that these ideas be tolerably given with smooth paint, they are content, and call it nature. How differ-

* Here I include even the great ones—even Titian and Veronese,—excepting only Tintoret and the religious schools.

ent it is from anything that nature ever did, or ever will do, I have endeavored to show ; but I cannot, and do not, expect the contrast to be fully felt, unless the reader will actually go out on days when, either before or after rain, the clouds arrange themselves into vigorous masses, and after arriving at something like a conception of their distance and size, from the mode in which they retire over the horizon, will for himself trace and watch their varieties of form and outline, as mass rises over mass in their illuminated bodies. Let him climb from step to step over their craggy and broken slopes, let him plunge into the long vistas of immeasurable perspective, that guide back to the blue sky ; and when he finds his imagination lost in their immensity, and his senses confused with their multitude, let him go to Claude, to Salvator, or to Poussin, and ask them for a like space, or like infinity.

But perhaps the most grievous fault of all, in the clouds of these painters, is the utter want of transparency. Not in her most ponderous and lightless masses will nature ever leave us

without some evidence of transmitted sunshine ; and she perpetually gives us passages in which the vapor becomes visible only by the sunshine which it arrests and holds within itself, not caught on its surface, but entangled in its mass—floating fleeces, precious with the gold of heaven ; and this translucency is especially indicated on the dark sides even of her heaviest wreaths, which possess opalescent and delicate hues of partial illumination, far more dependent upon the beams which pass through them than on those which are reflected upon them.

Nothing, on the contrary, can be more painfully and ponderously opaque than the clouds of the old masters universally. However far removed in aerial distance, and however brilliant in light, they never appear filmy or evanescent, and their light is always *on* them, not *in* them. And this effect is much increased by the positive and persevering determination on the part of their outlines not to be broken in upon, nor interfered with in the slightest degree, by any presumptuous blue, or impertinent winds. There is no inequality, no variation, no losing or disguising of line, no melting into nothingness, nor shattering into spray ; edge succeeds edge with imperturbable

§ 14. Total want of transparency and evanescence in the clouds of ancient landscape.

equanimity, and nothing short of the most decided interference on the part of tree-tops, or the edge of the picture, prevents us from being able to follow them all the way round, like the coast of an island.

And be it remembered that all these faults and deficiencies are to be found in their drawing merely of the separate masses of the solid cumulus, the easiest drawn of all clouds. But

§ 15. Farther proof of their deficiency in space. nature scarcely ever confines herself to such masses; they form but the thousandth part of her variety of effect. She builds up a pyramid of

their boiling volumes, bars this across like a mountain with the gray cirrus, envelops it in black, ragged, drifting vapor, covers the open part of the sky with mottled horizontal fields, breaks through these with sudden and long sunbeams, tears up their edges with local winds, scatters over the gaps of blue the infinity of multitude of the high cirri, and melts even the unoccupied azure into palpitating shades. And all this is done over and over again in every quarter of a mile. Where Poussin or Claude have three similar masses, nature has fifty pictures, made up each of millions of minor thoughts—fifty aisles penetrating through angelic chapels to the Shechinah of the blue—fifty hollow ways among bewildered hills—each with their own nodding rocks, and cloven precipices, and radiant summits, and robing vapors, but all unlike each other, except in beauty, all bearing witness to the unwearied, exhaustless operation of the Infinite Mind. Now, in cases like these especially, as we observed before of general nature, though it is altogether hopeless to follow out in the space of any one picture this incalculable and inconceivable glory, yet the painter can at least see that the space he has at his command, narrow and confined as it is, is made complete use of, and that no part of it shall be without entertainment and food for thought. If he could subdivide it by millionths of inches, he could not reach the multitudinous majesty of nature; but it is at least incumbent upon him to make the most of what he has, and not, by exaggerating the proportions, banishing the variety and repeating the forms of his clouds, to set at defiance the eternal principles of the heavens—fitfulness and infinity. And now let us, keeping in memory what we have seen of Poussin and Salvator

take up one of Turner's skies, and see whether *he* is as narrow in his conception, or as niggardly in his space. It does not matter which we take, his sublime Babylon* is a fair example for our present purpose.

§ 16. Instance of perfect truth in the sky of Turner's Babylon.

Ten miles away, down the Euphrates, where it gleams last along the plain, he gives us a drift of dark elongated vapor, melting beneath into a dim haze which embraces the hills on the horizon. It is exhausted with its own motion, and broken up by the wind in its own body into numberless groups of billowy and tossing fragments, which, beaten by the weight of storm down to the earth, are just lifting themselves again on wearied wings, and perishing in the effort. Above these, and far beyond them, the eye goes back to a broad sea of white, illuminated mist, or rather cloud melted into rain, and absorbed again before that rain has fallen, but penetrated throughout, whether it be vapor or whether it be dew, with soft sunshine, turning it as white as snow. Gradually as it rises, the rainy fusion ceases, you cannot tell where the film of blue on the left begins—but it is deepening, deepening still,—and the cloud, with its edge first invisible, then all but imaginary, then just felt when the eye is *not* fixed on it, and lost when it is, at last rises, keen from excessive distance, but soft and mantling in its body, as a swan's bosom fretted by faint wind, heaving fitfully against the delicate deep blue, with white waves, whose forms are traced by the pale lines of opalescent shadow, shade only because the light is within it, and not upon it, and which break with their own swiftness into a driven line of level spray, winnowed into threads by the wind, and flung before the following vapor like those swift shafts of arrowy water which a great cataract shoots into the air beside it, trying to find the earth. Beyond these, again, rises a colossal mountain of gray cumulus, through whose shadowed sides the sunbeams penetrate in dim, sloping, rain-like shafts; and over which they fall in a broad burst of streaming light, sinking to the earth, and showing through their own visible radiance the three successive ranges of hills which connect its desolate plain with space. Above, the edgy summit of the cumulus, broken into fragments, recedes

* Engraved in Findel's Bible Illustrations

into the sky, which is peopled in its serenity with quiet multitudes of the white, soft, silent cirrus ; and under these again, drift near the zenith, disturbed and impatient shadows of a darker spirit, seeking rest and finding none.

Now this is nature ! It is the exhaustless living energy with which the universe is filled ; and what will you set beside it of the works of other men ? Show me a single picture, in the whole compass of ancient art, in which I can pass from cloud to cloud, from region to region, from first to second and third heaven, as I can here, and you may talk of Turner's want of truth. Turn to the Pools of Solomon, and walk through the passages of mist as they melt on the one hand into those stormy fragments of fiery cloud, or, on the other, into the cold solitary shadows that compass the sweeping hill, and when you find an inch without air and transparency, and a hairbreadth without changefulness and thought ; and when you can count the torn waves of tossing radiance that gush from the sun, as you can count the fixed, white, insipidities of Claude ; or when you can measure the modulation and the depth of that hollow mist, as you can the flourishes of the brush upon the canvas of Salvator, talk of Turner's want of truth !

But let us take up simpler and less elaborate works, for there is too much in these to admit of being analyzed.

In the vignette of the Lake of Como, in Rogers's Italy, the space is so small that the details have been partially lost by the engraver : but enough remain to illustrate the great principles of cloud from which we have endeavored to explain.

§ 18. Truths of outline and character in his Como.

Observe first the general angular outline of the volumes on the left of the sun. If you mark the points where the direction of their outline changes, and connect those points by right lines, the cloud will touch, but will not cut, those lines throughout. Yet its contour is as graceful as it is full of character—toppling, ready to change—fragile as enormous—evanescent as colossal. Observe how, where it crosses the line of the sun, it becomes luminous, illustrating what has been observed of the visibility of mist in sunlight. Observe, above all, the multiplicity of its solid form, the depth of its shadows in perpetual transition : it is not round and swelled, half light and half dark, but full of breaking irregular

shadow and transparency—variable as the wind, and melting imperceptibly above into the haziness of the sun-lighted atmosphere, contrasted in all its vast forms with the delicacy and the multitude of the brightly touched cirri. Nothing can surpass the truth of this ; the cloud is as gigantic in its simplicity as the Alp which it opposes ; but how various, how transparent, how infinite in its organization !

I would draw especial attention, both here and in all other works of Turner, to the beautiful use of the low horizontal bars or fields of cloud, (*cirrostratus*.) which associate themselves so frequently—more especially before storms—with the true cumulus, floating on its flanks, or capping it, as if it were a mountain, and seldom mingling with its substance, unless in the very formation of rain. They supply us with one of those beautiful instances of natural composition, by which the artist is superseded and excelled—for, by the occurrence of these horizontal flakes, the rolling form of the cumulus is both opposed in its principal lines, and gifted with an apparent solidity and vastness, which no other expedient could have exhibited, and which far exceed in awfulness the impression of the noblest mountains of the earth. I have seen in the evening light of Italy, the Alps themselves out-towered by ranges of these mighty clouds, alternately white in the starlight, and inhabited by fire.

Turn back to the first vignette in the Italy. The angular outlines and variety of modulation in the clouds above the sail, and the delicate atmosphere of morning into which they are dissolved about the breathing hills, require no comment ; but one part of this vignette demands especial notice ; it is the repetition of the outline of the snowy mountain by the light cloud above it.

§ 19. Association of the *cirrostratus* with the cumulus.

§ 20. The deep-based knowledge of the Alps in Turner's Lake of Geneva.

The cause of this I have already explained (*vide* page 228,) and its occurrence here is especially valuable as bearing witness to the thorough and scientific knowledge thrown by Turner into his slightest works. The thing cannot be seen once in six months ; it would not have been noticed, much less introduced by an ordinary artist, and to the public it is a dead letter, or an offence. Ninety-nine persons in a hundred would not have observed this pale wreath of parallel cloud above the

hill, and the hundredth in all probability says it is unnatural. It requires the most intimate and accurate knowledge of the Alps before such a piece of refined truth can be understood.

At the 216th page we have another and a new case, in which clouds in perfect repose, unaffected by wind, or any influence but that of their own elastic force, boil, rise, and melt in the heaven with more approach to globular form than under any other circumstances is possible. I name this vignette, not only because it is most remarkable for the buoyancy and elasticity of inward energy, indicated through the most ponderous forms, and affords us a beautiful instance of the junction of the cirrostratus with the cumulus, of which we have just been speaking (§ 19,) but because it is a characteristic example of Turner's use of one of the facts of nature not hitherto noticed, that the edge of a partially transparent body is often darker than its central surface, because at the edge the light penetrates and passes through, which from the centre is reflected to the eye. The sharp, cutting edge of a wave, if not broken into foam, frequently appears for an instant almost black; and the outlines of these massy clouds, where their projecting forms rise in relief against the light of their bodies, are almost always marked clearly and firmly by very dark edges. Hence we have frequently, if not constantly, multitudinous forms indicated only by outline, giving character and solidity to the great masses of light, without taking away from their breadth. And Turner avails himself of these boldly and constantly,—outlining forms with the brush of which no other indication is given. All the grace and solidity of the white cloud on the right-hand side of the vignette before us, depends upon such outlines.

§ 21. Further principles of cloud form exemplified in his Amalfi.

As I before observed of mere execution, that one of the best tests of its excellence was the expression of *infinity*; so it may be noticed with respect to the painting of details generally, that more difference lies between one artist and another, in the attainment of this quality, than in any other of the efforts of art; and that if we wish, without reference to beauty of composition, or any other interfering circumstances, to form a judgment of the truth of painting, perhaps the very first thing

§ 22. Reasons for insisting on the *infinity* of Turner's works. *Infinity* is almost an unerring test of all truth.

As I before observed of mere execution, that one of the best tests of its excellence was the expression of *infinity*; so it may be noticed with respect to the painting of details generally, that more difference lies between one artist and another, in the attainment of this quality, than in any other of the efforts of art; and that if we wish, without reference to beauty of composition, or any other interfering circumstances, to form a judgment of the truth of painting, perhaps the very first thing

we should look for, whether in one thing or another—foliage, or clouds, or waves—should be the expression of *infinity* always and everywhere, in all parts and divisions of parts. For we may be quite sure that what is not infinite, cannot be true; it does not, indeed, follow that what is infinite, always is true, but it cannot be altogether false, for this simple reason; that it is impossible for mortal mind to compose an infinity of any kind for itself, or to form an idea of perpetual variation, and to avoid all repetition, merely by its own combining resources. The moment that we trust to ourselves, we repeat ourselves, and therefore the moment we see in a work of any kind whatsoever, the expression of infinity, we may be certain that the workman has gone to nature for it; while, on the other hand, the moment we see repetition, or want of infinity, we may be certain that the workman has *not* gone to nature for it.

For instance, in the picture of Salvator before noticed, No. 220 in the Dulwich Gallery, as we see at once that the two masses of cloud absolutely repeat each other in every one of their forms, and that each is composed of about twelve white sweeps of the brush, all forming the same curve, and all of the same length; and as we can count these, and measure their common diameter, and by stating the same to anybody else, convey to him a full and perfect idea and knowledge of that sky in all its parts and proportions,—as we can do this, we may be absolutely certain, without reference to the real sky, or to any other part of nature, without even knowing what the white things were intended for, we may be certain that they cannot possibly resemble *anything*; that whatever they were meant for, they can be nothing but a violent contradiction of all nature's principles and forms. When, on the other hand, we take up such a sky as that of Turner's Rouen, seen from St. Catherine's Hill, in the Rivers of

France, and find, in the first place, that he has given us a distance over the hills in the horizon, into which, when we are tired of penetrating, we must turn and come back again, there being not the remotest chance of getting to the end of it; and when we see that from this measureless distance up to the zenith, the whole sky is one ocean of alternate waves of cloud

§ 23. Instances of the total want of it in the works of Salvator.

§ 24. And of the universal presence of it in those of Turner. The conclusions which may be arrived at from it.

and light, so blended together that the eye cannot rest on any one without being guided to the next, and so to a hundred more, till it is lost over and over again in every wreath—that if it divides the sky into quarters of inches, and tries to count or comprehend the component parts of any single one of those divisions, it is still as utterly defied and defeated by the part as by the whole—that there is not one line out of the millions there which repeats another, not one which is unconnected with another, not one which does not in itself convey histories of distance and space, and suggest new and changeful form; then we may be all but certain, though these forms are too mysterious and too delicate for us to analyze—though all is so crowded and so connected that it is impossible to test any single part by particular laws—yet without any such tests, we may be sure that this infinity can only be based on truth—that it *must* be nature, because man could not have originated it, and that every form must be faithful, because none is like another. And therefore it is that I insist so constantly on this great quality of landscape painting, as it appears in Turner; because it is not merely a constant and most important truth in itself, but it almost amounts to a demonstration of every other truth. And it will be found a far rarer attainment in the works of other

§25. The multiplication of objects, or increase of their size, will not give the impression of infinity, but is the resource of novices.

men than is commonly supposed, and the sign, wherever it is really found, of the very highest art. For we are apt to forget that the greatest *number* is no nearer infinity than the least, if it be definite number; and the vastest bulk is no nearer infinity than the most minute, if it be definite bulk; so that a man may multiply his objects forever and ever, and be no nearer infinity than he had reached with one, if he do not vary them and confuse them; and a man may reach infinity in every touch and line, and part, and unit, if in these he be truthfully various and obscure. And we shall find, the more we examine the works of the old masters, that always, and in all parts, they are totally wanting in every feeling of infinity, and therefore in *all* truth: and even in the works of the moderns, though the aim is far more just, we shall frequently perceive an erroneous choice of means, and a substitution of mere number or bulk for real infinity.

And therefore, in concluding our notice of the central cloud region, I should wish to dwell particularly on those skies of Turner's, in which we have the whole space of the heaven covered with the delicate dim flakes of gathering vapor, which are the intermediate link between the central region and that of the rain-cloud, and which assemble and grow out of the air ; shutting up the heaven with a gray interwoven veil, before the approach of storm, faint, but universal, letting the light of the upper sky pass pallidly through their body, but never rending a passage for the ray. We have the first approach and gathering of this kind of sky most gloriously given in the vignette at page 115 of Rogers's Italy, which is one of the most perfect pieces of feeling (if I may transgress my usual rules for an instant) extant in art, owing to the extreme grandeur and stern simplicity of the strange and ominous forms of level cloud behind the building. In that at page 223, there are passages of the same kind, of exceeding perfection. The sky through which the dawn is breaking in the Voyage of Columbus, and that with the Moonlight under the Rialto, in Rogers's Poems, the skies of the Bethlehem, and the Pyramids in Finden's Bible series, and among the Academy pictures, that of the Hero and Leander, and Flight into Egypt, are characteristic and noble examples, as far as any individual works can be characteristic of the universality of this mighty mind. I ought not to forget the magnificent solemnity and fulness of the wreaths of gathering darkness in the Folkestone.

We must not pass from the consideration of the central cloud region without noticing the general high quality of the cloud-drawing of Stanfield. He is limited in his range, and is apt in extensive compositions to repeat himself, neither is he ever very refined ; but his cloud-form is firmly and fearlessly chiselled, with perfect knowledge, though usually with some want of feeling. As far as it goes, it is very grand and very tasteful, beautifully developed in the space of its solid parts and full of action. Next to Turner, he is incomparably the noblest master of cloud-form of all our artists ; in fact, he is the only one among them who really can *draw* a cloud. For it is a very different thing to rub out an irregular white space neatly with the handkerchief, or to leave a bright

§ 26. Farther instances of infinity in the gray skies of Turner.

§ 27. The excellence of the cloud-drawing of Stanfield.

little bit of paper in the middle of a wash, and to give the real anatomy of cloud-form with perfect articulation of chiaroscuro. We have multitudes of painters who can throw a light bit of straggling vapor across their sky, or leave in it delicate and tender passages of breaking light ; but this is a very different thing from taking up each of those bits or passages, and giving it structure, and parts, and solidity. The eye is satisfied with exceedingly little, as an indication of cloud, and a few clever sweeps of the brush on wet paper may give all that it requires ; but this is not *drawing* clouds, nor will it ever appeal fully and deeply to the mind, except when it occurs only as a part of a higher system. And there is not one of our modern artists, except Stanfield, who can do much more than this. As soon as they attempt to lay detail upon their clouds, they appear to get bewildered, forget that they are dealing with forms regulated by precisely the same simple laws of light and shade as more substantial matter, overcharge their color, confuse their shadows and dark sides, and end in mere ragged confusion. I believe the evil arises from their never attempting to render clouds except with the brush ; other objects, at some period of study, they take up with the chalk or lead, and so learn something of their form ; but they appear to consider clouds as altogether dependent on cobalt and camel's hair, and so never understand anything of their real anatomy. But whatever the cause, I cannot point to any central clouds of the moderns, except those of Turner and Stanfield, as really showing much knowledge of, or feeling for, nature, though *all* are superior to the conventional and narrow conceptions of the ancients. We are all right as far as we go, our work may be incomplete, but it is not false ; and it is far better, far less injurious to the mind, that we should be little attracted to the sky, and taught to be satisfied with a light suggestion of truthful form, than that we should be drawn to it by violently pronounced outline and intense color, to find in its finished falsehood everything to displease or to mislead—to hurt our feelings, if we have foundation for them, and corrupt them, if we have none.

§ 28. The average standing of the English school.

CHAPTER IV.

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS: THIRDLY, OF THE REGION OF THE RAIN-CLOUD.

THE clouds which I wish to consider as characteristic of the lower, or rainy region, differ not so much in their real nature from those of the central and uppermost regions, as in appearance, owing to their greater nearness. For the central clouds, and perhaps even the high cirri, deposit moisture, if not distinctly rain, as is sufficiently proved by the existence of snow on the highest peaks of the Himalah; and when, on any such mountains, we are brought into close contact with the central clouds,* we find them little differing from the ordinary rain-cloud of the plains, except by being slightly less dense and dark. But the apparent differences, dependent on proximity, are most marked and important.

In the first place, the clouds of the central region have, as has been before observed, pure and aerial grays for their dark sides, owing to their necessary distance from the observer: and as this distance permits a multitude of local phenomena capable of influencing color, such as accidental sunbeams, refractions, transparencies, or local mists and showers, to be collected into a space comparatively small, the colors of these clouds are always changeful and palpitating; and whatever degree of gray or of gloom may be mixed with them is invariably pure and aerial. But the nearness of the rain-cloud rendering it impossible for a number of phenomena to be at once

§ 1. The apparent difference in character between the lower and central clouds is dependent chiefly on proximity.

§ 2. Their marked difference in color.

* I am unable to say to what height the real rain-cloud may extend; perhaps there are no mountains which rise altogether above storm. I have never been in a violent storm at a greater height than between 8000 and 9000 feet above the level of the sea. There the rain-cloud is exceedingly light, compared to the ponderous darkness of the lower air.

visible, makes its hue of gray monotonous, and (by losing the blue of distance) warm and brown compared to that of the upper clouds. This is especially remarkable on any part of it which may happen to be illumined, which is of a brown, bricky, ochreous tone, never bright, always coming in dark outline on the lights of the central clouds. But it is seldom that this takes place, and when it does, never over large spaces, little being usually seen of the rain-cloud but its under and dark side. This, when the cloud above is dense, becomes of an inky and cold gray, and sulphureous and lurid if there be thunder in the air.

With these striking differences in color, it presents no fewer nor less important in form, chiefly from losing almost all definiteness of character and outline. It is sometimes nothing more

than a thin mist, whose outline cannot be traced, § 3. And in definiteness of form. rendering the landscape locally indistinct or dark ;

if its outline be visible, it is ragged and torn ; rather a spray of cloud, taken off its edge and sifted by the wind, than an edge of the cloud itself. In fact, it rather partakes of the nature, and assumes the appearance, of real water in the state of spray, than of elastic vapor. This appearance is enhanced by the usual presence of formed rain, carried along with it in a columnar form, ordinarily, of course, reaching the ground like a veil, but very often suspended with the cloud, and hanging from it like a jagged fringe, or over it in light, rain being always lighter than the cloud it falls from. These columns, or fringes, of rain are often waved and bent by the wind, or twisted, sometimes even swept upwards from the cloud. The velocity of these vapors, though not necessarily in reality greater than that of the central clouds, appears greater, owing to their proximity, and, of course, also to the usual presence of a more violent wind. They are also apparently much more in the power of

the wind, having less elastic force in themselves; but § 4. They are subject to precisely the same great laws. they are precisely subject to the same great laws of

form which regulate the upper clouds. They are not solid bodies borne about with the wind, but they carry the wind with them, and cause it. Every one knows, who has ever been out in a storm, that the time when it rains heaviest is precisely the time when he cannot hold up his umbrella ; that the wind is carried with the cloud, and lulls when it has passed

Every one who has ever seen rain in a hill country, knows that a rain-cloud, like any other, may have all its parts in rapid motion, and yet, as a whole, remain in one spot. I remember once, when in crossing the Tête Noire, I had turned up the valley towards Trient, I noticed a rain-cloud forming on the Glacier de Trient. With a west wind, it proceeded towards the Col de Balme, being followed by a prolonged wreath of vapor, always forming exactly at the same spot over the glacier. This long, serpent-like line of cloud went on at a great rate till it reached the valley leading down from the Col de Balme, under the slate rocks of the Croix de Fer. There it turned sharp round, and came down this valley, at right angles to its former progress, and finally directly contrary to it, till it came down within five hundred feet of the village, where it disappeared ; the line behind always advancing, and always disappearing, at the same spot. This continued for half an hour, the long line describing the curve of a horseshoe ; always coming into existence, and always vanishing at exactly the same places ; traversing the space between with enormous swiftness. This cloud, ten miles off, would have looked like a perfectly motionless wreath, in the form of a horseshoe, hanging over the hills.

To the region of the rain-cloud belong also all those phenomena of drifted smoke, heat-haze, local mists in the morning or evening ; in valleys, or over water, mirage, white steaming vapor rising in evaporation from moist and open surfaces, and everything which visibly affects the condition of the atmosphere without actually assuming the form of cloud. These phenomena are as perpetual in all countries as they are beautiful, and afford by far the most effective and valuable means which the painter possesses, for modification of the forms of fixed objects. The upper clouds are distinct and comparatively opaque, they do not modify, but conceal ; but through the rain-cloud, and its accessory phenomena, all that is beautiful may be made manifest, and all that is hurtful concealed : what is paltry may be made to look vast, and what is ponderous, aerial ; mystery may be obtained without obscurity, and decoration without disguise. And, accordingly, nature herself uses it constantly, as one of her chief means of most perfect effect ; not in one country, nor another, but every-

§ 5. Value, to the painter, of the rain-cloud.

where—everywhere, at least, where there is anything worth calling landscape. I cannot answer for the desert of the Sahara, but I know that there can be no greater mistake, than supposing that delicate and variable effects of mist and rain-cloud are peculiar to northern climates. I have never seen in any place or country effects of mist more perfect than in the Campagna of

Rome, and among the hills of Sorrento. It is there-
 § 6. The old fore matter of no little marvel to me, and I con-
 masters have not left a single in- ceive that it can scarcely be otherwise to any reflect-
 stance of the painting of the ing person, that throughout the whole range of an-
 rain-cloud, and cient landscape art, there occurs no instance of the
 very few efforts at it. Gaspar Pous- painting of a real rain-cloud, still less of any of the
 sin's storms.

more delicate phenomena characteristic of the region. “Storms” indeed, as the innocent public persist in calling such abuses of nature and abortions of art as the two windy Gaspars in our National Gallery, are common enough; massive concretions of ink and indigo, wrung and twisted very hard, apparently in a vain effort to get some moisture out of them; bearing up courageously and successfully against a wind, whose effects on the trees in the foreground can be accounted for only on the supposition that they are all of the India-rubber species. Enough of this in all conscience, we have, and to spare; but for the legitimate rain-cloud, with its ragged and spray-like edge, its veilly transparency, and its columnar burden of blessing, neither it, nor anything like it, or approaching it, occurs in any painting of the old masters that I have ever seen; and I have seen enough to warrant my affirming that if it occur anywhere, it must be through accident rather than intention. Nor is there stronger evidence of any perception, on the part of these much respected artists, that there were such things in the world as mists or vapors. If a cloud under their direction ever touches a mountain, it does it effectually and as if it meant to do it. There is no mystifying the matter; here is a cloud, and there is a hill; if it is to come on at all, it comes on to some purpose, and there is no hope of its ever going off again. We have, therefore, little to say of the efforts of the old masters, in any scenes which might naturally have been connected with the clouds of the lowest region, except that the faults of form specified in considering the central clouds, are, by way of being energetic or

sublime, more glaringly and audaciously committed in their "storms;" and that what is a wrong form among clouds possessing form, is there given with increased generosity of fiction to clouds which have no form at all.

Supposing that we had nothing to show in modern art, of the region of the rain-cloud, but the dash of Cox, the blot of de Wint, or even the ordinary stormy skies of the body of our in-

§ 7. The great power of the moderns in this respect.

ferior water-color painters, we might yet laugh all efforts of the old masters to utter scorn. But one

among our water-color artists, deserves especial notice—before we ascend the steps of the solitary throne—as having done in his peculiar walk, what for faithful and pure truth, truth indeed of a limited range and unstudied application, but yet most faithful and most pure, will remain unsurpassed if not unrivalled.—Copley Fielding. We are well aware how much of

§ 8. Works of Copley Fielding.

what he has done depends in a great degree upon particular tricks of execution, or on a labor somewhat too mechanical to be meritorious; that it is rather the *texture* than the *plan* of his sky which is to be admired, and that the greater part of what is pleasurable in it will fall rather under the head of dexterous imitation than of definite thought. But whatever detractions from his merit we may be compelled to make on these grounds, in considering art as the embodying of beauty, or the channel of mind, it is impossible, when we are speaking of truth only, to pass by his down scenes and moorland showers, of some years ago, in which he produced some of the most perfect and faultless passages of mist and rain-cloud which art has ever seen. Wet,

§ 9. His peculiar truth.

transparent, formless, full of motion, felt rather by their shadows on the hills than by their presence in the sky, becoming dark only through increased depth of space, most translucent where most sombre, and light only through increased buoyancy of motion, letting the blue through their interstices, and the sunlight through their chasms, with the irregular playfulness and traceless gradation of nature herself, his skies will remain, as long as their colors stand, among the most simple, unadulterated, and complete transcripts of a particular nature which art can point to. Had he painted five instead of five hundred such, and gone on to other sources of beauty, he might,

there can be little doubt, have been one of our greatest artists.

But it often grieves us to see how his power is limited to a particular moment, to that easiest moment for imitation, when knowledge of form may

be superseded by management of the brush, and the judgment of the colorist by the manufacture of a color ; the moment when all form is melted down and drifted away in the descending veil of rain, and when the variable and fitful colors of the heaven are lost in the monotonous gray of its storm tones.* We can only account for this by supposing that there is something radically wrong in his method of study ; for a man of his evident depth of feeling and pure love of truth ought not to be, cannot be, except from some strange error in his mode of out-of-door practice, thus limited in his range, and liable to decline of power. We have little doubt that almost all such failures arise from the artist's neglecting the use of the chalk, and supposing that either the power of drawing forms, or the sense of their beauty, can be maintained unweakened or unblunted, without constant and laborious studies in simple light and shade, of form only. The brush is at once the artist's greatest aid and enemy ; it enables him to make his power available, but at the same time, it undermines his power, and unless it be constantly rejected for the pencil, never can be rightly used. But whatever the obstacle be, we do not doubt that it is one which, once seen, may be overcome or removed ; and we are in the constant hope of seeing this finely-minded artist shake off his lethargy, break the shackles of habit, seek in extended and right study the sources of real power, and become, what we have full faith in his capability of being, one of the leading artists of his time.

* I ought here, however, to have noted another effect of the rain-cloud, which, so far as I know, has been rendered only by Copley Fielding. It is seen chiefly in clouds gathering for rain, when the sky is entirely covered with a gray veil rippled or waved with pendent swells of soft texture, but excessively hard and liny in their edges. I am not sure that this is an agreeable or impressive form of the rain-cloud, but it is a frequent one, and it is often most faithfully given by Fielding ; only in some cases the edges becoming a little doubled and harsh have given a look of failure or misadventure to some even of the best studied passages ; and something of the same hardness of line is occasionally visible in his drawing of clouds by whose nature it is not warranted.

In passing to the works of our greatest modern master, it must be premised that the qualities which constitute a most essential part of the truth of the rain-cloud, are in no degree to be rendered by engraving. Its indefiniteness of torn and transparent form is far beyond the power of even our best engravers : I do not say beyond their possible power, if they would make themselves artists as well as workmen, but far beyond the power they actually possess ; while the depth and delicacy of the grays which Turner employs or produces, as well as the refinement of his execution, are, in the nature of things, utterly beyond all imitation by the opaque and lifeless darkness of the steel. What we say of his works, therefore, must be understood as referring only to the original drawings ; though we may name one or two instances in which the engraver has, to a certain degree, succeeded in distantly following the intention of the master.

Jumieges, in the Rivers of France, ought perhaps, after what we have said of Fielding, to be our first object of attention, because it is a rendering by Turner of Fielding's particular moment, and the only one existing, for Turner never repeats himself. One picture is allotted to one truth ; the statement is perfectly and gloriously made, and he passes on to speak of a fresh portion of God's revelation.* The haze of sunlit rain of this most magnificent picture, the gradual retirement of the dark wood into its depth, and the sparkling and evanescent light which sends its variable flashes on the abbey, figures, foliage, and foam, require no comment—they speak home at once. But there is added to this noble composition an incident which may serve us at once for a farther illustration of the nature and forms of cloud, and for a final proof how deeply and philosophically Turner has studied them.

We have on the right of the picture, the steam and the smoke of a passing steamboat. Now steam is nothing but an artificial cloud in the process of dissipation ; it is as much a cloud as those of the sky itself, that is, a quantity of moisture rendered visible in the air by imperfect solution. Accordingly, observe

§ 11. Impossibility of reasoning on the rain-clouds of Turner from engravings.

§ 12. His rendering of Fielding's particular moment in the Jumieges.

§ 13. Illustration of the nature of clouds in the opposed forms of smoke and steam.

* Compare Sect. I. Chap. IV. § 5.

how exquisitely irregular and broken are its forms, how sharp and spray-like; but with all the facts observed which were pointed out in Chap. II. of this Section, the convex side to the wind, the sharp edge on that side, the other soft and lost. Smoke, on the contrary, is an actual substance existing independently in the air, a solid opaque body, subject to no absorption nor dissipation but that of tenuity. Observe its volumes; there is no breaking up nor disappearing here; the wind carries its elastic globes before it, but does not dissolve nor break them.* Equally convex and void of angles on all sides, they are the exact representatives of the clouds of the old masters, and serve at once to show the ignorance and falsehood of these latter, and the accuracy of study which has guided Turner to the truth.

From this picture we should pass to the Llanthony,† which is the rendering of the moment immediately following that given in the Junieges. The shower is here half exhausted, half passed by, the last drops are rattling faintly through the glimmering hazel boughs, the white torrent, swelled by the sudden

§ 14. Moment of retiring rain in the Llanthony.

storm, flings up its hasty jets of springing spray to meet the returning light; and these, as if the heaven regretted what it had given, and were taking it back, pass, as they leap, into vapor, and fall not again, but vanish in the shafts of the sunlight‡—hurrying, fitful, wind-woven sunlight—which glides through the thick leaves, and

* It does not do so until the volumes lose their density by inequality of motion, and by the expansion of the warm air which conveys them. They are then, of course, broken into forms resembling those of clouds.

† No conception can be formed of this picture from the engraving. It is perhaps the most marvellous piece of execution and of gray color existing, except perhaps the drawing presently to be noticed, Land's End. Nothing else can be set beside it, even of Turner's own works—much less of any other man's.

‡ I know no effect more strikingly characteristic of the departure of a storm than the *smoking* of the mountain torrents. The exhausted air is so thirsty of moisture, that every jet of spray is seized upon by it, and converted into vapor as it springs; and this vapor rises so densely from the surface of the stream as to give it the exact appearance of boiling water. I have seen the whole course of the Arve at Chamonix one line of dense cloud, dissipating as soon as it had risen ten or twelve feet from the surface, but entirely concealing the water from an observer placed above it.

paces along the pale rocks like rain ; half conquering, half quenched by the very mists which it summons itself from the lighted pastures as it passes, and gathers out of the drooping herbage and from the streaming crags ; sending them with messages of peace to the far summits of the yet unveiled mountains whose silence is still broken by the sound of the rushing rain.

With this noble work we should compare one of which we can better judge by the engraving—the Loch Coriskin, in the illustrations to Scott, because it introduces us to another and a most remarkable instance of the artist's vast and varied knowledge. When rain falls on a mountain composed chiefly of barren rocks, their surfaces, § 15. And of commencing, chosen with peculiar meaning for Loch Coriskin.

being violently heated by the sun, whose most intense warmth always precedes rain, occasion sudden and violent evaporation, actually converting the first shower into steam. Consequently, upon all such hills, on the commencement of rain, white volumes of vapor are instantaneously and universally formed, which rise, are absorbed by the atmosphere, and again descend in rain, to rise in fresh volumes until the surfaces of the hills are cooled. Where there is grass or vegetation, this effect is diminished ; where there is foliage it scarcely takes place at all. Now this effect has evidently been especially chosen by Turner for Loch Coriskin, not only because it enabled him to relieve its jagged forms with veiling vapor, but to tell the tale which no pencilling could, the story of its utter absolute barrenness of unlichened, dead, desolated rock :—

“ The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of nature's genial glow,
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencoe.
And copse on Cruchan Ben ;
But here, above, around, below,
On mountain, or in glen,
Nor tree, nor plant, nor shrub, nor flower,
Nor aught of vegetative power,
The wearied eye may ken ;
But all its rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone.”

LORD OF THE ISLES, Canto III

Here, again, we see the absolute necessity of scientific and entire acquaintance with nature, before this great artist can be understood. That which, to the ignorant, is little more than an unnatural and meaningless confusion of steam-like vapor, is to the experienced such a full and perfect expression of the character of the spot, as no means of art could have otherwise given.

In the Long Ships Lighthouse, Land's End, we have clouds without rain—at twilight—enveloping the cliffs of the coast, but concealing nothing, every outline being visible through their

§ 16. The drawing of transparent vapor in the Land's End. gloom ; and not only the outline—for it is easy to do this—but the *surface*. The bank of rocky coast approaches the spectator inch by inch, felt clearer

and clearer as it withdraws from the garment of cloud—not by edges more and more defined, but by a surface more and more unveiled. We have thus the painting, not of a mere transparent veil, but of a solid body of cloud, every inch of whose increasing distance is marked and felt. But the great wonder of the picture is the intensity of gloom which is attained in pure warm gray, without either blackness or blueness. It is a gloom, dependent rather on the enormous space and depth indicated, than on actual pitch of color, distant by real drawing, without a grain of blue, dark by real substance, without a stroke of blackness ; and with all this, it is not formless, but full of indications of character, wild, irregular, shattered, and indefinite—full of the energy of storm, fiery in haste, and yet flinging back out of its motion the fitful swirls of bounding drift, of tortured vapor tossed up like men's hands, as in defiance of the tempest, the jets of resulting whirlwind, hurled back from the rocks into the face of the coming darkness ; which, beyond all other characters, mark the raised passion of the elements. It is this untraceable, unconnected, yet perpetual form—this

§ 17. The individual character of its parts. fulness of character absorbed in the universal energy—which distinguish nature and Turner from

all their imitators. To roll a volume of smoke before the wind, to indicate motion or violence by monotonous similarity of line and direction, is for the multitude ; but to mark the independent passion, the tumultuous separate existence of every wreath of writhing vapor, yet swept away and overpowered by one omnipotence of storm, and thus to bid us

“ Be as a Presence or a motion—one
 Among the many there—while the mists
 Flying, and rainy vapors, call out shapes
 And phantoms from the crags and solid earth,
 As fast as a musician scatters sounds
 Out of an instrument,”—

this belongs only to nature and to him.

The drawing of Coventry may be particularized as a farther example of this fine suggestion of irregularity and fitfulness, through very constant parallelism of direction, both in rain and clouds. The great mass of cloud, which traverses

§ 18. Deep studied form of swift rain-cloud in the Coventry.

the whole picture, is characterized throughout by severe right lines, nearly parallel with each other, into which every one of its wreaths has a tendency to range itself; but no one of these right lines is actually and entirely parallel to any other, though all have a certain tendency, more or less defined in each, which impresses the mind with the most distinct *idea* of parallelism. Neither are any of the lines actually straight and unbroken: on the contrary, they are all made up of the most exquisite and varied curves, and it is the imagined line which joins the apices of these—a tangent to them all, which is in reality straight.* They are suggested, not represented, right lines: but the whole volume of cloud is visibly and totally bounded by them; and, in consequence, its whole body is felt to be dragged out and elongated by the force of the tempest which it carries with it, and every one of its wreaths to be (as was before explained) not so much something borne *before* or *by* the wind, as the visible form and presence of the wind itself. We could not possibly point out a more magnificent piece

§ 19. Compared with forms given by Salvator.

of drawing as a contrast to such works of Salvator as that before alluded to (159 Dulwich Gallery).

Both are rolling masses of connected cloud; but in Turner's, there is not one curve that repeats another, nor one curve in itself monotonous, nor without character, and yet every part and portion of the cloud is rigidly subjected to the same forward, fierce, inevitable influence of storm. In Salvator's, every curve repeats its neighbor, every curve is monotonous in itself, and yet the whole cloud is curling about hither and

* Note especially the dark uppermost outline of the mass.

thither, evidently without the slightest notion where it is going to, and unregulated by any general influence whatsoever. I could not bring together two finer or more instructive examples, the one of everything that is perfect, the other of everything that is childish or abominable, in the representation of the same facts.

But there is yet more to be noticed in this noble sky of Turner's. Not only are the lines of the rolling cloud thus irregular in their parallelism, but those of the falling rain are equally

§ 20. Entire expression of tempest by minute touches and circumstances in the Coventry.

varied in their direction, indicating the gusty changefulness of the wind, and yet kept so straight and stern in their individual descent, that we are not suffered to forget its strength. This impres-

sion is still farther enhanced by the drawing of the smoke, which blows every way at once, yet turning perpetually in each of its swirls back in the direction of the wind, but so suddenly and violently, as almost to assume the angular lines of lightning. Farther, to complete the impression, be it observed that all the cattle, both upon the near and distant hill-side, have left off grazing, and are standing stock still and stiff, with their heads down and their backs to the wind ; and finally, that we may be told not only what the storm is, but what it has been, the gutter at the side of the road is gushing in a complete torrent, and particular attention is directed to it by the full burst of light in the sky being brought just above it, so that all its waves are bright with the reflection.

But I have not quite done with this noble picture yet. Impetuous clouds, twisted rain, flickering sunshine, fleeting shadow, gushing water, and oppressed cattle, all speak the same story of tumult, fitfulness, power, and velocity.

§ 21. Especially by contrast with a passage of extreme repose.

Only one thing is wanted, a passage of repose to contrast with it all, and it is given. High and

far above the dark volumes of the swift rain-cloud, are seen on the left, through their opening, the quiet, horizontal, silent flakes of the highest cirrus, resting in the repose of the deep sky. Of all else that we have noticed in this drawing, some faint idea can be formed from the engraving : but not the slightest of the delicate and soft forms of these pausing vapors, and still less of the exquisite depth and palpitating tenderness of the blue with

which they are islanded. Engravers, indeed, invariably lose the effect of all passages of cold color, under the mistaken idea that it is to be kept *pale* in order to indicate distance; whereas it ought commonly to be darker than the rest of the sky.

To appreciate the full truth of this passage, we must understand another effect peculiar to the rain-cloud, that its openings exhibit the purest blue which the sky ever shows. For, as we saw in the first chapter of this section, that aqueous

§ 22. The truth of this particular passage. Perfectly pure blue sky only seen after rain, and how seen.

vapor always turns the sky more or less gray, it follows that we never can see the azure so intense as when the greater part of this vapor has just fallen in rain. Then, and then only, pure blue sky becomes visible in the first openings, distinguished especially by the manner in which the clouds melt into it; their edges passing off in faint white threads and fringes, through which the blue shines more and more intensely, till the last trace of vapor is lost in its perfect color. It is only the upper white clouds, however, which do this, or the last fragments of rain-clouds, becoming white as they disappear, so that the blue is never *corrupted* by the cloud, but only paled and broken with pure white, the purest white which the sky ever shows. Thus we have a melting and palpitating color, never the same for two inches together, deepening and broadening here and there into intensity of perfect azure, then drifted and dying away through every tone of pure pale sky, into the snow white of the filmy cloud. Over this roll the determined edges of the rain-clouds, throwing it all far back, as a retired scene, into the upper sky. Of this

§ 23. Absence of this effect in the works of the old masters.

effect the old masters, as far as I remember, have taken no cognizance whatsoever; all with them is, as we partially noticed before, either white cloud or pure blue: they have no notion of any double-dealing or middle measures. They bore a hole in the sky, and let you up into a pool of deep, stagnant blue, marked off by the clear round edges of imperturbable, impenetrable cloud on all sides—beautiful in positive color, but totally destitute of that exquisite gradation and change, that fleeting, panting, hesitating effort, with which the first glance of the natural sky is shed through the turbulence of the earth-storm.

They have some excuse, however, for not attempting this, in the nature of their material, as one accidental dash of the brush with water-color on a piece of wet or damp paper, will come nearer the truth and transparency of this rain-blue than the labor of a day in oils ; and the purity and felicity of some of the careless, melting water-color skies of Cox and Tayler may well make us fastidious in all effects of this kind. It is, however, only in the drawings of Turner that we have this perfect transparency and variation of blue, given in association with the perfection of considered form. In Tayler and Cox the forms are always partially accidental and unconsidered, often essentially bad, and always incomplete ; in Turner the dash of the brush is as completely under the rule of thought and feeling as its slowest line ; all that it does is perfect, and could not be altered, even in a hairbreadth, without injury ; in addition to this, peculiar management and execution are used in obtaining quality in the color itself, totally different from the manipulation of any other artist ; and none, who have ever spent so much as one hour of their lives over his drawing, can forget those dim passages of dreamy blue, barred and severed with a thousand delicate and soft and snowy forms, which, gleaming in their patience of hope between the troubled rushing of the racked earth-cloud, melt farther and farther back into the height of heaven, until the eye is bewildered and the heart lost in the intensity of their peace. I do not say that this is beautiful—I do not say it is ideal, nor refined—I only ask you to watch for the first opening of the clouds after the next south rain, and tell me if it be not *true* ?

The Gosport affords us an instance more exquisite even than the passage above named in the Coventry, of the use of this melting and dewy blue, accompanied by two distances of rain-cloud, one towering over the horizon, seen blue with excessive distance through crystal atmosphere ; the other breaking overhead in the warm, sulphurous fragments of spray, whose loose and shattering transparency, being the most essential characteristic of the near rain-cloud, is precisely that which the old masters are sure to contradict. Look, for instance, at the wreaths of *cloud* ? in the Dido and Æneas of Gaspar Poussin, with their unpleasant edges cut as

§ 24. Success of our water-color artists in its rendering. Use of it by Turner.

§ 25. Expression of near rain-cloud in the Gosport, and other works.

hard and solid and opaque and smooth as thick black paint can make them, rolled up over one another like a dirty sail badly reefed ; or look at the agreeable transparency and variety of the cloud-edge where it cuts the Mountain in N. Poussin's Phocion, and compare this with the wreaths which float across the precipice in the second vignette in Campbell, or which gather around the Ben Lomond, the white rain gleaming beneath their dark transparent shadows ; or which drift up along the flanks of the wooded hills, called from the river by the morning light, in the Oakhampton ; or which island the crags of Snowdon in the Llanberis, or melt along the Cumberland hills, while Turner leads us across the sands of Morecambe Bay. This last drawing deserves especial notice : it is of an evening in spring, when the south rain has ceased at sunset, and through the lulled and golden air, the confused and fantastic mists float up along the hollows of the mountains, white and pure, the resurrection in spirit of the new-fallen rain, catching shadows from the precipices, and mocking the dark peaks with their own mountain-like but melting forms till the solid mountains seem in motion like those waves of cloud, emerging and vanishing as the weak wind passes by their summits ; while the blue, level night advances along the sea, and the surging breakers leap up to catch the last light from the path of the sunset.

I need not, however, insist upon Turner's peculiar power of rendering *mist*, and all those passages of intermediate mystery, between earth and air, when the mountain is melting into the cloud, or the horizon into the twilight ; because his supremacy in these points is altogether undisputed, except by persons to whom it would be impossible to prove anything which did not fall under the form of a Rule of Three. Nothing is more natural than that the studied form and color of this great artist should be little understood, because they require for the full perception of their meaning and truth, such knowledge and such time as not one in a thousand possesses, or can bestow ; but yet the truth of them for that very reason is capable of demonstration, and there is hope of our being able to make it in some degree felt and comprehended even by those to whom it is now a dead letter, or an

§ 26. Contrasted with Gaspar Poussin's rain-cloud in the Dido and Æneas.

§ 27. Turner's power of rendering mist.



OKEHAMPTON CASTLE.
From a painting by Turner.

offence. But the aerial and misty effects of landscape, being matters of which the eye should be simply cognizant, and without effort of thought, as it is of light, must, where they are exquisitely rendered, either be felt at once, or prove that degree of blindness and bluntness in the feelings of the observer which there is little hope of ever conquering. Of course for persons who have never seen in their lives a cloud vanishing on a mountain-side, and whose conceptions of mist or vapor are limited to ambiguous outlines of spectral hackney-coaches and bodiless lamp-posts, discern through a brown combination of sulphur, soot, and gaslight, there is yet some hope ; we cannot, indeed, tell them what the morning mist is like in mountain air, but far be it from us to tell them that they are incapable of feeling its beauty if they will seek it for themselves. But if you have ever in your life had one opportunity with your eyes and heart open, of seeing the dew rise from a hill-pasture, or the storm gather on a sea-cliff, and if you have yet no feeling for the glorious passages of mingled earth and heaven which Turner calls up before you into breathing, tangible being, there is indeed no hope for your apathy—art will never touch you, nor nature inform.

It would be utterly absurd, among the innumerable passages of this kind given throughout his works, to point to one as more characteristic or more perfect than another. The Simmer Lake, near Askrig, for expression of mist pervaded with sunlight,—the Lake Lucerne, a recent and unengraved drawing, for the recession of near mountain form, not into dark, but into *luminous* cloud, the most difficult thing to do in art,—the Harlech, for expression of the same phenomena, shown over vast spaces in distant ranges of hills, the Ehrenbreitstein, a recent drawing, for expression of mist, rising from the surface of water at sunset,—and, finally, the glorious Oberwesel and Nemi,* for passages of all united, may, however, be named, as noble instances, though in naming five works I insult five hundred.

One word respecting Turner's more violent storms, for we

* In the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham.

have hitherto been speaking only of the softer rain-clouds, associated with gusty tempest, but not of the thunder-cloud and the whirlwind. If there be any one point in

§ 30. Turner's

more violent effects of tempest are never rendered another, it is in their rendering of dark and furious storm. It appears to be utterly impossible to

force it into their heads, that an artist does *not* leave his color with a sharp edge and an angular form by accident, or that they may have the pleasure of altering it and improving upon it; and equally impossible to persuade them that energy and gloom may

in *some* circumstances be arrived at without any extraordinary expenditure of ink. I am aware of

§ 31. General system of landscape engraving.

no engraver of the present day whose ideas of a storm-cloud are not comprised under two heads, roundness and blackness; and, indeed, their general principles of translation (as may be distinctly gathered from their larger works) are the following: 1. Where the drawing is gray, make the paper black. 2. Where the drawing is white, cover the page with zigzag lines. 3. Where the drawing has particularly tender tones, cross-hatch them. 4. Where any outline is particularly angular, make it round. 5. Where there are vertical reflections in water, express them with very distinct horizontal lines. 6. Where there is a passage of particular simplicity, treat it in sections. 7. Where there is anything intentionally concealed, make it out. Yet, in spite of the necessity which all engravers impose upon themselves, of rigidly observing this code of general laws, it is difficult to conceive how such pieces of work, as the plates of Stonehenge and Winchelsea, can ever have been

§ 32. The storm in the Stonehenge.

presented to the public, as in any way resembling, or possessing even the most fanciful relation to the Turner drawings of the same subjects. The original of the Stonehenge is perhaps the standard of storm-drawing, both for the overwhelming power and gigantic proportions and spaces of its cloud-forms, and for the tremendous qualities of lurid and sulphurous colors which are gained in them. All its forms are marked with violent angles, as if the whole muscular energy—so to speak—of the cloud, were writhing in every fold, and their fantastic and fiery volumes have a peculiar horror—an awful life—shadowed out in their strange, swift, fearful outlines,

which oppress the mind more than even the threatening of their gigantic gloom. The white lightning, not as it is drawn by less observant or less capable painters, in zigzag fortifications, but in its own dreadful irregularity of streaming fire, is brought down, not merely over the dark clouds, but through the full light of an illumined opening to the blue, which yet cannot abate the brilliancy of its white line ; and the track of the last flash along the ground is fearfully marked by the dog howling over the fallen shepherd, and the ewe pressing her head upon the body of her dead lamb.

I have not space, however, to enter into examination of Turner's storm-drawing ; I can only warn the public against supposing that its effect is ever rendered by engravers. The

§ 33. General character of such effects as given by Turner. His expression of falling rain. great principles of Turner are angular outline, vastness and energy of form, infinity of gradation, and depth without blackness. The great principles of the engravers (*vide* Pæstum, in Rogers's Italy, and the Stonehenge, above alluded to) are rounded outline, no edges, want of character, equality of strength, and blackness without depth.

I have scarcely, I see, on referring to what I have written, sufficiently insisted on Turner's rendering of the rainy *fringe*, whether in distances, admitting or concealing more or less of the extended plain, as in the Waterloo, and Richmond (with the girl and dog in the foreground,) or as in the Dunstaffnage, Glencoe, St. Michael's Mount, and Slave Ship, not reaching the earth, but suspended in waving and twisted lines from the darkness of the zenith. But I have no time for farther development of particular points ; I must defer discussion of them until we

§ 34. Recapitulation of the section. take up each picture to be viewed as a whole ; for the division of the sky which I have been obliged to make, in order to render fully understood the peculiarities of character in the separate cloud regions, prevents my speaking of any one work with justice to its concentration of various truth. Be it always remembered that we pretend not, at present, to give any account or idea of the sum of the works of any painter, much less of the universality of Turner's ; but only to explain in what real truth, as far as it is explicable, consists. and to illustrate it by those pictures in which it most dis-

tinctly occurs, or from which it is most visibly absent. And it will only be in the full and separate discussion of individual works, when we are acquainted also with what is beautiful, that we shall be completely able to prove or disprove the presence of the truth of nature.

The conclusion, then, to which we are led by our present examination of the truth of clouds, is, that the old masters attempted the representation of only one among the thousands of their systems of scenery, and were altogether false in the little they attempted : while we can find records in modern art of every form or phenomenon of the heavens, from the highest firmament that glorifies the ether to the wildest vapor that darkens the dust, and in all these records we find the most clear language and close thought, firm words, and true message, unstinted fullness and unfailing faith.

And indeed it is difficult for us to conceive how, even without such laborious investigation as we have gone through, any per-

son can go to nature for a single day or hour, when she is really at work in any of her nobler spheres of action, and yet retain respect for the old masters : finding, as find he will, that every scene which rises, rests, or departs before him, bears with it a thousand glories of which there is not

one shadow, one image, one trace or line, in any of their works ; but which will illustrate to him, at every new instant, some passage which he had not before understood in the high works of modern art. Stand upon the peak of some isolated mountain at daybreak, when the night mists first rise from off the plains, and watch their white and lake-like fields as they float in level bays and winding gulfs about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight ; watch when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts and passes away ; and down under their depths, the glittering city and green pasture lie like Atlantis, between the white paths of winding rivers ; the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills

§ 35. Sketch of a few of the skies of nature, taken as a whole, compared with the works of Turner and of the old masters. Morning on the plains.

shorten their gray shadows upon the plain. Has Claude given this? Wait a little longer, and you shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up towards you, along the winding valleys, till they couch in quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light,* upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose leagues of massy undulation will melt back and back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above, in the serene heaven, like a wild, bright, impossible dream, foundationless and inaccessible, their very bases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below.† Has Claude given this? Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the promontories, massy and motionless, only piled with every instant higher and higher into the sky,‡ and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapors,§ which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their gray network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and the motion of the leaves together; and then you will see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid wreaths create themselves, you know not how, along the shoulders of the hills; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipices, as a hawk pauses over his prey.¶ Has Claude given this? And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapor swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black, bending fringes,¶ or pacing in pale columns

* I have often seen the white thin, morning cloud, edged with the seven colors of the prism. I am not aware of the cause of this phenomenon, for it takes place not when we stand with our backs to the sun, but in clouds near the sun itself, irregularly and over indefinite spaces, sometimes taking place in the body of the cloud. The colors are distinct and vivid, but have a kind of metallic lustre upon them.

† Lake Lucerne.

‡ St. Maurice (Rogers's Italy).

§ Vignette, the Great St. Bernard.

¶ Vignette of the Andes.

¶ St. Michael's Mount—England series.

along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go.

§ 37. Sunset in
tempest. Serene
midnight.

And then, as the sun sinks, you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking, and loaded yet with snow-white torn, steam-like rags of capricious vapor, now gone, now gathered again ; * while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away, but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all the air about it with blood.† Has Claude given this? And then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills,‡ brighter—brighter yet, till the large white circle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds,§ step by step, line by line ; star after star she quenches with her kindling light, setting in their stead an army of pale, penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the earth, which move together, hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion, that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them. Ask Claude, or his brethren, for that. And then

§ 38. And sunrise
on the Alps.

wait yet for one hour, until the east again becomes purple,|| and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning ; watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire ; watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning ; their long avalanches cast down in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to the heaven ; the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole

* Illustration to the Antiquary. Goldeau, a recent drawing of the highest order.

† Vignette to Campbell's Last Man. ‡ Caerlaverock. § St. Denis

|| Alps at Daybreak (Rogers's Poems :) Delphi, and various vignettes

heaven—one scarlet canopy,—is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing, vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels ; and then, when you can look no more for gladness, and when you are bowed down with fear and love of the Maker and Doer of this, tell me who has best delivered this His message unto men !

CHAPTER V.

EFFECTS OF LIGHT RENDERED BY MODERN ART.

I HAVE before given my reasons (Sect. II. Chap. III.) for not wishing at present to enter upon the discussion of particular effects of light. Not only are we incapable of rightly viewing

§ 1. Reasons for merely at present naming, without examining the particular effects of light rendered by Turner.

them, or reasoning upon them, until we are acquainted with the principles of the beautiful ; but, as I distinctly limited myself, in the present portion of the work, to the examination of *general* truths, it would be out of place to take cognizance

of the particular phases of light, even if it were possible to do so, before we have some more definite knowledge of the material objects which they illustrate. I shall therefore, at present, merely set down a rough catalogue of the effects of light at different hours of the day, which Turner has represented: naming a picture or two, as an example of each, which we will hereafter take up one by one, and consider the physical science and the feeling together. And I do this, in the hope that,

§ 2. Hopes of the author for assistance in the future investigation of them.

in the mean time, some admirer of the old masters will be kind enough to select from the works of any one of them, a series of examples of the same effects, and to give me a reference to the pictures, so that I may be able to compare each with each ; for, as my limited knowledge of the works of Claude or Poussin does not supply me with the requisite variety of effect, I shall be grateful for assistance.

The following list, of course, does not name the hundredth part of the effects of light given by Turner : it only names those which are distinctly and markedly separate from each other, and representative each of an entire class. Ten or twelve examples, often many more, might be given of each ; every one of which would display the effects of the same hour and light, modified by different circumstances of weather, situation, and character of objects subjected to them, and especially by the

management of the sky ; but it will be generally sufficient for our purposes to examine thoroughly one good example of each.

The prefixed letters express the direction of the light. F. front light (the sun in the centre, or near the top of the picture ;) L. lateral light, the sun out of the picture on the right or left of the spectator ; L. F. the light partly lateral, partly fronting the spectator, as when he is looking south, with the sun in the south-west ; L. B. light partly lateral, partly behind the spectator, as when he is looking north, with the sun in the south-west.

MORNING.

EFFECTS.	NAMES OF PICTURES.
L....An hour before sunrise in winter. Violent storm, with rain, on the sea. Light-houses seen through it.	Lowestoffe, Suffolk.
F....An hour before sunrise. Serene sky, with light clouds. Dawn in the distance.	Vignette to Voyage of Columbus.
L....Ten minutes before sunrise. Violent storm. Torchlight.	Fowey Harbor.
F....Sunrise. Sun only half above the horizon. Clear sky, with light cirri.	Vignette to Human Life
F....Sun just disengaged from horizon. Misty, with light cirri.	Alps at Daybreak.
F....Sun a quarter of an hour risen. Sky covered with scarlet clouds.	Castle Upnor.
L.F...Serene sky. Sun emerging from a bank of cloud on horizon, a quarter of an hour risen.	Orford, Suffolk.
L.F...Same hour. Light mists in flakes on hillsides. Clear air.	Skiddaw.
L.F...Light flying rain-clouds gathering in valleys. Same hour.	Oakhampton.
L.B...Same hour. A night storm rising off the mountains. Dead calm.	Lake of Geneva.
L....Sun half an hour risen. Cloudless sky.	Beaugency.
L....Same hour. Light mists lying in the valleys.	Kirby Lonsdale.
F....Same hour. Bright cirri. Sun dimly seen through battle smoke, with conflagration.	Hohenlinden.
L....Sun an hour risen. Cloudless and clear.	Buckfastleigh.

NOON AND AFTERNOON.

EFFECTS.	NAMES OF PICTURES.
L.B...Midday. Dead calm, with heat. Cloudless.	Corinth.
L....Same hour. Serene and bright, with streaky clouds.	Lantern at St. Cloud.
L....Same hour. Serene, with multitudes of the high cirrus.	Shylock, and other Venices.
L....Bright sun, with light wind and clouds.	Richmond, Middlesex.
F....Two o'clock. Clouds gathering for rain, with heat.	Warwick. Blenheim.
F....Rain beginning, with light clouds and wind.	Piacenza.
L....Soft rain, with heat.	Caldron Snout Fall.
L.F...Great heat. Thunder gathering.	Malvern.
L....Thunder breaking down, after intense heat, with furious wind.	Winchelsea.
L....Violent rain and wind, but cool.	Llamberis, Coventry, &c
L.F...Furious storm, with thunder.	Stonehenge, Pæstum, &c
L.B...Thunder retiring, with rainbow. Dead calm, with heat.	Nottingham.
L....About three o'clock, summer. Air very cool and clear. Exhausted thunder-clouds low on hills.	Bingen.
F....Descending sunbeams through soft clouds, after rain.	Carew Castle.
L....Afternoon, very clear, after rain. A few clouds still on horizon. Dead calm.	Saltash.
F....Afternoon of cloudless day, with heat.	Mercury and Argus. Oberwesel. Nemi.

EVENING.

L....An hour before sunset. Cloudless.	Trematon Castle.
F....Half an hour before sunset. Light clouds. Misty air.	Lake Albano. Florence.
F....Within a quarter of an hour of sunset. Mists rising. Light cirri.	Dater Hora Quiet.
L.F...Ten minutes before sunset. Quite cloudless.	Durham.
F....Same hour. Tumultuous spray of illumined rain-cloud.	Solomon's Pools. Slave ship.
F....Five minutes before sunset. Sky covered with illumined cirri.	Temeraire. Napoleon Various vignettes.
L.B...Same hour. Serene sky. Full moon rising.	Kenilworth.

EFFECTS.	NAMES OF PICTURES.
F....Sun setting. Detached light cirri and clear air.	Amboise.
L....Same hour. Cloudless. New moon.	Troyes.
L.F...Same hour. Heavy storm clouds. Moon-rise.	First vignette. Pleasures of Memory.
L.B...Sun just set. Sky covered with clouds. New moon setting.	Caudebec.
L.B...Sun five minutes set. Strong twilight, with storm clouds. Full moonrise.	Wilderness of Engedi. Assos.
L.B...Same hour. Serene, with light clouds.	Montjan.
L.B...Same hour. Serene. New moon.	Pyramid of Caius Cestius.
L.B...Sun a quarter of an hour set. Cloudless.	Chateau de Blois.
L.F...Sun half an hour set. Light cirri.	Clairmont.
F....Same hour. Dead calm at sea. New moon and evening star.	Cowes.
F...Sun three quarters of an hour set. Moon struggling through storm clouds, over heavy sea.	Folkestone.

NIGHT.

F....An hour after sunset. No moon. Torch-light.	St. Julien. Tours.
F....Same hour. Moon rising. Fire from furnaces.	Dudley.
L.F....Same hour, with storm clouds. Moon rising.	Nantes.
L....Same hour, with light of rockets and fire.	Juliet and her Nurse.
F....Midnight. Moonless, with light-houses.	Calais.
Same hour, with fire-light.	Burning of Parliament Houses.
F....Ditto. Full moon. Clear air, with delicate clouds. Light-houses.	Towers of the Hevé.
F....Ditto, with conflagration, battle smoke, and storm.	Waterloo.
F....Ditto. Moonlight through mist. Buildings illuminated in interior.	Vignette. St. Herbert's Isle.
F....Ditto. Full moon with halo. Light rain-clouds.	St. Denis.
F....Full moon. Perfectly serene. Sky covered with white cirri.	Alnwick. Vignette of Rialto, and Bridge of Sighs

SECTION IV. OF TRUTH OF EARTH.

CHAPTER I.

OF GENERAL STRUCTURE.

By truth of earth, we mean the faithful representation of the facts and forms of the bare ground, considered as entirely divested of vegetation, through whatever disguise, or under what-

§ 1. First laws of the organization of the earth, and their importance in art.

ever modification the clothing of the landscape may occasion. Ground is to the landscape painter what the naked human body is to the historical.

The growth of vegetation, the action of water, and even of clouds upon it and around it, are so far subject and subordinate to its forms, as the folds of the dress and the fall of the hair are to the modulation of the animal anatomy. Nor is this anatomy always so concealed, but in all sublime compositions, whether of nature or art, it must be seen in its naked purity. The laws of the organization of the earth are distinct and fixed as those of the animal frame, simpler and broader, but equally authoritative and inviolable. Their results may be arrived at without knowledge of the interior mechanism; but for that very reason ignorance of them is the more disgraceful, and violation of them more unpardonable. They are in the landscape the foundation of all other truths—the most necessary, therefore, even if they were not in themselves attractive; but they are as beautiful as they are essential, and every abandonment of them by the artist must end in deformity as it begins in falsehood.

That such abandonment is constant and total in the works of the old masters, has escaped detection, only because of persons generally cognizant of art, few have spent time enough in hill

countries to perceive the certainty of the laws of hill anatomy :
 § 2. The slight at- and because few, even of those who possess such
 tention ordinarily opportunities, ever think of the common earth be-
 paid to them. neath their feet, as anything possessing specific
 Their careful form, or governed by steadfast principles. That
 study by modern artists. such abandonment should have taken place cannot be surprising,
 after what we have seen of their fidelity to skies. Those artists
 who, day after day, could so falsely represent what was forever
 before their eyes, when it was to be one of the most important
 and attractive parts of their picture, can scarcely be expected to
 give with truth what they could see only partially and at inter-
 vals, and what was only to be in their picture a blue line in the
 horizon, or a bright spot under the feet of their figures.

That such should be all the space allotted by the old land-
 scape painters to the most magnificent phenomena of nature ;
 that the only traces of those Apennines, which in Claude's walks
 along the brow of the Pincian, forever bounded his horizon with
 their azure wall, should, in his pictures, be a cold white outline
 in the extreme of his tame distance ; and that Salvator's so-
 journs among their fastnesses should only have taught him to
 shelter his banditti with such paltry morsels of crag as an Alpine
 stream would toss down before it like a foam-globe ; though it
 may indeed excite our surprise, will, perhaps, when we have
 seen how these slight passages are executed, be rather a subject
 of congratulation than of regret. It might, indeed, have short-
 ened our labor in the investigation of mountain truth, had not
 modern artists been so vast, comprehensive, and multitudinous
 in their mountain drawings, as to compel us, in order to form
 the slightest estimate of their knowledge, to enter into some
 examination of every variety of hill scenery. We shall first gain
 some general notion of the broad organization of large masses,
 and then take those masses to pieces, until we come down to the
 crumbling soil of the foreground.

Mountains are, to the rest of the body of the earth, what vio-
 lent muscular action is to the body of man. The
 § 3. General muscles and tendons of its anatomy are, in the
 structure of the earth. The hills mountain, brought out with fierce and convulsive
 are its action, the energy, full of expression, passion, and strength ;
 plains its rest. the plains and the lower hills are the repose and the effortless

motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty, yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. This, then, is the first grand principle of the truth of the earth. The spirit of the hills is action ; that of the lowlands, repose ; and between these there is to be found every variety of motion and of rest ; from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan hands to Heaven, saying, “ I live forever !”

But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature, that while the exerted limb marks its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath. Mountains are the bones of the earth, their highest peaks are invariably those parts of its anatomy which in the plains lie buried under five and twenty thousand feet of solid thickness of super-incumbent soil, and which spring up in the mountain ranges in vast pyramids or wedges, flinging their garment of earth away from them on each side. The masses of the lower hills are laid over and against their sides, like the masses of lateral masonry against the skeleton arch of an unfinished bridge, except that they slope up to and lean against the central ridge : and, finally, upon the slopes of these lower hills are strewn the level beds of sprinkled gravel, sand, and clay, which form the extent of the champaign. Here then is another grand principle of the truth of earth, that the mountains must come from under all, and be the support of all : and that everything else must be laid in their arms, heap above heap, the plains being the uppermost. Opposed to this truth is every appearance of the hills being laid upon the plains, or built upon them. Nor is this a truth only of the earth on a large scale, for every minor rock (in position) comes out from the soil about it as an island out of the sea, lifting the earth near it like waves beating on its sides.

Such being the structure of the framework of the earth, it is next to be remembered that all soil whatsoever, wherever it is accumulated in greater quantity than is sufficient to nourish the moss of the wallflower, has been so, either by the direct trans

§ 4. Mountains come out from underneath the plains, and are their support.

porting agency of water, or under the guiding influence and power of water. All plains capable of cultivation are deposits from some kind of water—some from swift and tremendous currents, leaving their soil in sweeping banks and furrowed ridges—others, and this is in mountain districts almost invariably the case, by slow deposit from a quiet lake in the mountain hollow, which has been gradually filled by the soil carried into it by streams, which soil is of course finally left spread at the exact level of the surface of the former lake, as level as the quiet water itself. Hence we constantly meet with plains in hill districts, which fill the hollows of the hills with as perfect and faultless a level as water, and out of which the steep rocks rise at the edge with as little previous disturbance, or indication of their forms beneath, as they do from the margin of a quiet lake. Every delta—and there is one at the head of every lake in every hill-district—supplies an instance of this. The rocks at Altorf plunge beneath the plain, which the lake has left, at as sharp an angle as they do into the lake itself beside the chapel of Tell. The plain of the Arve, at Sallenche, is terminated so sharply by the hills to the south-east, that I have seen a man sleeping with his back supported against the mountain, and his legs stretched on the plain; the slope which supported his back rising 5000 feet above him, and the couch of his legs stretched for five miles before him. In distant effect these champaigns lie like deep, blue, undisturbed water, while the mighty hills around them burst out from beneath, raging and tossing like a tumultuous sea. The valleys of Meyringen, Interlachen, Altorf, Sallenche, St. Jean de Maurienne; the great plain of Lombardy itself, as seen from Milan or Padua, under the Alps, the Euganeans, and the Apennines; and the Campo Felice under Vesuvius, are a few, out of the thousand instances, which must occur at once to the mind of every traveller.

Let the reader now open Rogers's Italy, at the seventeenth page, and look at the vignette which heads it of the battle of Marengo. It needs no comment. It cannot but carry with it, after what has been said, the instant conviction that Turner is as much of a geologist as he is of a painter. It is a summary of all we have been say-

§ 5. Structure of the plains themselves. Their perfect level, when deposited by quiet water.

§ 6. Illustrated by Turner's Marengo.

ing, and a summary so distinct and clear, that without any such explanation it must have forced upon the mind the impression of such facts—of the plunging of the hills underneath the plain—of the perfect level and repose of this latter laid in their arms, and of the tumultuous action of the emergent summits.

We find, according to this its internal structure, which, I believe, with the assistance of Turner, can scarcely now be misunderstood, that the earth may be considered as divided into three

§7. General divisions of formation resulting from this arrangement. Plan of investigation.

great classes of formation, which geology has already named for us. Primary—the rocks, which, though in position lower than all others, rise to form the central peaks, or interior nuclei of all mountain ranges. Secondary—the rocks which are laid in beds above these, and which form the greater proportion of all hill scenery. Tertiary—the light beds of sand, gravel, and clay, which are strewed upon the surface of all, forming plains and habitable territory for man. We shall find it convenient, in examining the truth of art, to adopt, with a little modification, the geological arrangement, considering first, the formation and character of the highest or central peaks; then the general structure of the lower mountains, including in this division those composed of the various slates which a geologist would call primary; and, lastly, the minutiae and most delicate characters of the beds of these hills, when they are so near as to become foreground objects, and the structure of the common soil which usually forms the greater space of an artist's foreground. Hence our task will arrange itself into three divisions—the investigation of the central mountains, of the interior mountains, and of the foreground.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE CENTRAL MOUNTAINS.

It does not always follow, because a mountain is the highest of its group, that it is in reality one of the central range. The Jungfrau is only surpassed in elevation, in the chain of which it is a member, by the Schreckhorn and Finster-Aarhorn ; but it is entirely a secondary mountain. But the central peaks are usually the highest, and may be considered as the chief components of all mountain scenery in the snowy regions. Being composed of the same rocks in all countries, their external character is the same everywhere. Its chief essential points are the following.

§ 1. Similar character of the central peaks in all parts of the world. Their summits are almost invariably either pyramids or wedges. Domes may be formed by superincumbent snow, or appear to be formed by the continuous outline of a sharp ridge seen transversely, with its precipice to the spectator ; but wherever a rock appears, the uppermost termination of that rock will be a steep edgy ridge, or a sharp point, very rarely presenting even a gentle slope on any of its sides, but usually inaccessible unless encumbered with snow.

§ 2. Their arrangements in pyramids or wedges, divided by vertical fissures. These pyramids and wedges split vertically, or nearly so, giving smooth faces of rock, either perpendicular or very steeply inclined, which appear to be laid against the central wedge or peak, like planks upright against a wall. The surfaces of these show close parallelism ; their fissures are vertical, and cut them smoothly, like the edges of shaped planks. Often groups of these planks, if I may so call them, rise higher than those between them and the central ridge, forming detached ridges inclining towards the central one. The planks are cut transversely, sometimes by graceful curvilinear fissures ; sometimes by straight fissures, which are commonly parallel to the slope of one of the sides of the peak, while the main direction of the

planks or leaves is parallel to that of its other side, or points directly to its summit. But the *universal* law of fracture is—first, that it is clean and sharp, having a perfectly smooth surface, and a perfectly sharp edge to all the fissures ; secondly, that every fissure is steeply inclined, and that a horizontal line, or one approaching to it, is an impossibility, except in some turn of a curve.

Hence, however the light may fall, these peaks are seen marked with sharp and defined shadows, indicating the square edges of the planks of which they are made up, which shadows sometimes are vertical, pointing to the summit ; but are oftener parallel to one of the sides of the peak, and intersected by a second series, parallel to the other side. Where there has been much disintegration, the peak is often surrounded with groups of lower ridges or peaks, like the leaves of an artichoke or a rose, all evidently part and parcel of the great peak ; but falling back from it, as if it were a budding flower, expanding its leaves one by one.

Now, if I were giving a lecture on geology, and were searching for some means of giving the most faithful idea possible of the external appearance caused by this structure of the primary hills, I should throw my geological outlines aside, and take up Turner's vignette of the Alps at Daybreak. After what has been said, a single glance at it will be enough. Observe the exquisite decision with which the edge of the uppermost plank of the great peak is indicated by its clear dark side and sharp shadow ; then the rise of the second low ridge on its side, only to descend again precisely in the same line ; the two fissures of this peak, one pointing to its summit, the other rigidly parallel to the great slope which descends towards the sun ; then the sharp white *aiguille* on the right, with the great fissure from its summit, rigidly and severely square, as marked below, where another edge of rock is laid upon it. But this is not all ; the black rock in the foreground is equally a member of the mass, its chief slope parallel with that of the mountain, and all its fissures and lines inclined in the same direction ; and, to complete the mass of evidence more forcibly still, we have the dark mass on the left articulated with absolute right lines, as parallel as if they

§ 3. Causing groups of rock resembling an artichoke or rose.

§ 4. The faithful statement of these facts by Turner in his Alps at Daybreak.

had been drawn with a ruler, indicating the tops of two of these huge plates or planks, pointing, with the universal tendency, to the great ridge, and intersected by fissures parallel to it. Throughout the extent of mountain, not one horizontal line, nor an approach to it, is discernible. This cannot be chance—it cannot be composition—it may not be beautiful—perhaps nature is very wrong to be so parallel, and very disagreeable in being so straight;—but this *is* nature, whether we admire it or not.

In the vignette illustration to Jacqueline, we have another series of peaks, whose structure is less developed, owing to their distance, but equally clear and faithful in all points, as far as it is given. But the vignette of Aosta, in the Italy, is perhaps more striking than any that could be named for its rendering of the perfect parallelism of the lower and smaller peaks with the great lines of the mass they compose; and that of the Andes, the second in Campbell, for its indication of the multitudes of the vertical and plank-like beds arranged almost like the leaves of a flower. This last especially, one of the very noblest, most faithful, most scientific statements of mountain form which even Turner has ever made, can leave little more to be said or doubted.

Now, whenever these vast peaks, rising from 12,000 to 24,000 feet above the sea, form part of anything like a landscape, that is to say, whenever the spectator beholds them from the region of vegetation, or even from any distance at which it is possible to get something like a view of their whole mass, they must be at so great a distance from him as to become aerial and faint in all their details. Their summits, and all those higher masses of whose character we have been speaking, can by no possibility be nearer to him than twelve or fifteen miles; to approach them nearer he must climb—must leave the region of vegetation, and must confine his view to a part, and that a very limited one, of the mountain he is ascending. Whenever, therefore, these mountains are seen over anything like vegetation, or are seen in mass, they *must* be in the far distance. Most artists would treat an horizon fifteen miles off very much as if it were mere air; and though the greater clearness of the upper air permits the high

§ 5. Vignette of the Andes and others.

§ 6. Necessary distance, and consequent aerial effect on all such mountains.

summits to be seen with extraordinary distinctness, yet they never can by any possibility have dark or deep shadows, or intense dark relief against a light. Clear they may be, but faint they must be, and their great and prevailing characteristic, as distinguished from other mountains, is want of apparent solidity. They rise in the morning light rather like sharp shades, cast up into the sky, than solid earth. Their lights are pure, roseate, and cloud-like—their shadows transparent, pale, and opalescent, and often indistinguishable from the air around them, so that the mountain-top is seen in the heaven only by its flakes of motionless fire.

Now, let me once more ask, though I am sufficiently tired of asking, what record have we of anything like this in the works of the old masters? There is no vestige in any existing picture of the slightest effort to represent the high hill ranges; and as for such drawing of their forms as we have found in Turner, we might as well look for them among the Chinese. Very possibly it may be all quite right,—very probably these men showed the most cultivated taste, the most unerring judgment, in filling their pictures with mole-hills and sand-heaps. Very probably the withered and poisonous banks of Avernus, and the sand and cinders of the Campagna, are much more sublime things than the Alps; but still what limited truth it is, if truth it be, when through the last fifty pages we have been pointing out fact after fact, scene after scene, in clouds and hills, (and not individual facts nor scenes, but great and important classes of them,) and still we have nothing to say when we come to the old masters; but, “they are not here.” Yet this is what we hear so constantly called painting “general” nature.

Although, however, there is no vestige among the old masters of any effort to represent the attributes of the higher mountains seen in comparative proximity, we are not altogether left without evidence of their having thought of them as sources of light in the extreme distance, as for example, in that of the reputed Claude in our National Gallery, called the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. I have not the slightest doubt of its being a most execrable copy; for there is not one touch nor line of even decent

§ 7. Total want of any rendering of their phenomena in ancient art.

§ 8. Character of the representations of Alps in the distances of Claude.

painting in the whole picture ; but as connoisseurs have considered it a Claude, as it has been put in our Gallery for a Claude, and as people admire it every day for a Claude, I may at least presume it has those qualities of Claude in it which are wont to excite the public admiration, though it possesses none of those which sometimes give him claim to it ; and I have so reasoned, and shall continue to reason upon it, especially with respect to facts of form, which cannot have been much altered by the copyist. In the distance of that picture (as well as in that of the Sinon before Priam, which I have little doubt is at least partially original, and whose central group of trees is a very noble piece of painting) is something white, which I believe must be intended for a snowy mountain, because I do not see that it

can well be intended for anything else. Now no
§ 9. Their total want of magnitude and aerial distance. mountain of elevation sufficient to be so sheeted with perpetual snow, can by any possibility sink so low on the horizon as this something of Claude's, unless it be at a distance of from fifty to seventy miles. At such distances, though the outline is invariably sharp and edgy to an excess, yet all the circumstances of aerial perspective, faintness of shadow, and isolation of light, which I have described as characteristic of the Alps fifteen miles off, take place, of course, in a threefold degree ; the mountains rise from the horizon like transparent films, only distinguishable from mist by their excessively keen edges, and their brilliant flashes of sudden light ; they are as unsubstantial as the air itself, and impress their enormous size by means of this aerialness, in a far greater degree at these vast distances, than even when towering above the spectator's head. Now, I ask of the candid observer, if there be the smallest vestige of an effort to attain—if there be the most miserable, the most contemptible shadow of attainment of such an effect by Claude ? Does that white thing on the horizon look seventy miles off ? Is it faint, or fading, or to be looked for by the eye before it can be found out ? Does it look high ? does it look large ? does it look impressive ? You cannot but feel that there is not a vestige of any kind or species of truth in that horizon ; and that, however artistical it may be, as giving brilliancy to the distance, (though, as far as I have any feeling in the matter, it only gives coldness,) it is, in the very branch of art on which

Claude's reputation chiefly rests, aerial perspective, hurling defiance to nature in her very teeth.

But there are worse failures yet in this unlucky distance. Aerial perspective is not a matter of paramount importance, because nature infringes its laws herself and boldly too, though never in a case like this before us ; but there are some laws which nature never violates—her laws of form. § 10. And violation of specific form. No mountain was ever raised to the level of perpetual snow, without an infinite multiplicity of form. Its foundation is built of a hundred minor mountains, and, from these, great outtrusses run in converging ridges to the central peak. There is no exception to this rule ; no mountain 15,000 feet high is ever raised without such preparation and variety of outwork. Consequently, in distant effect, when chains of such peaks are visible at once, the multiplicity of form is absolutely oceanic ; and though it is possible in near scenes to find vast and simple masses composed of lines which run unbroken for a thousand feet, or more, it is physically impossible when these masses are thrown seventy miles back, to have simple outlines, for then these large features become mere jags, and hillocks, and are heaped and huddled together with endless confusion. To get a simple form, seventy miles away, mountain lines would be required unbroken for leagues ; and this, I repeat, is physically impossible. Hence these mountains of Claude, having no indication of the steep vertical summits which we have shown to be the characteristic of the central ridges, having soft edges instead of decisive ones, simple forms (one line to the plain on each side) instead of varied and broken ones, and being painted with a crude raw white, having no transparency, nor filminess, nor air in it, instead of rising in the opalescent mystery which invariably characterizes the distant snows, have the forms and the colors of heaps of chalk in a lime-kiln, not of Alps. They are destitute of energy, of height, of distance, of splendor, and of variety, and are the work of a man, whether Claude or not, who had neither feeling for nature, nor knowledge of art.

I should not, however, insist upon the faults of this picture, believing it to be a copy, if I had ever seen, even § 11. Even in his best works. in his most genuine works, an extreme distance of Claude with any of the essential characters of nature. But

although in his better pictures we have always beautiful drawing of the *air*, which in the copy before us is entirely wanting. the real features of the extreme mountain distance are equally neglected or maligned in all. There is, indeed, air between us and it; but ten miles, not seventy miles, of space. Let us observe a little more closely the practice of nature in such cases.

The multiplicity of form which I have shown to be necessary in the outline, is not less felt in the body of the mass. For, in all extensive hill ranges, there are five or six lateral chains separated by deep valleys, which rise between the spectator and the central ridge, showing their tops one over another, wave beyond wave, until the eye is carried back to the faintest and highest forms of

§ 12. Farther illustration of the distant character of mountain chains.

the principal chain. These successive ridges, and I speak now not merely of the Alps, but of mountains generally, even as low as 3000 feet above the sea, show themselves in extreme distance merely as vertical shades, with very sharp outlines, detached from one another by greater intensity, according to their nearness. It is with the utmost difficulty that the eye can discern any solidity or roundness in them; the lights and shades of solid form are both equally lost in the blue of the atmosphere, and the mountain tells only as a flat, sharp-edged film, of which multitudes intersect and overtop one another, separated by the greater faintness of the retiring masses. This is the most simple and easily imitated arrangement possible, and yet, both in nature and art, it expresses distance and size in a way otherwise quite unattainable. For thus, the whole mass of one mountain being of one shade only, the smallest possible difference in shade will serve completely to detach it from another, and thus ten or twelve distances may be made evident, when the darkest and nearest is an aerial gray as faint as the sky; and the beauty of such arrangements carried out as nature carries them, to their highest degree, is, perhaps, the most striking feature connected with hill scenery: you will never, by any chance, perceive in extreme distance, anything like solid

§ 13. Their excessive appearance of transparency.

form or projection of the hills. Each is a dead, flat, perpendicular film or shade, with a sharp edge darkest at the summit, and lost as it descends, and about equally dark whether turned towards the light or from it;

and of these successive films of mountain you will probably have half a dozen, one behind another, all showing with perfect clearness their every chasm and peak in the outline, and not one of them showing the slightest vestige of solidity, but on the contrary, looking so thoroughly transparent, that if it so happens, as I have seen frequently, that a conical near hill meets with its summit the separation of two distant ones, so that the right-hand slope of the nearer hill forms an apparent continuation of the right-hand slope of the left-hand farther hill, and *vice versa*, it is impossible to get rid of the impression that one or the more distant peaks is seen *through* the other.

I may point out in illustration of these facts, the engravings of two drawings of precisely the same chain of distant hills,—Stanfield's Borromean Islands, with the St. Gothard in the distance, and Turner's Arona, also with the St. Gothard in the distance. Far be it from me to indicate the former of these plates as in any way exemplifying the power of Stanfield, or affecting his reputation : it is an unlucky drawing, murdered by the engraver, and as far from being characteristic of Stanfield as it is from being like nature, but it is just what I want, to illustrate the particular error of which I speak ; and I prefer showing this error where it accidentally exists in the works of a really great artist, standing there alone, to point it out where it is confused with other faults and falsehoods in the works of inferior hands. The former of these plates is an example of everything which a hill distance is not, and the latter of everything which it is. In the former, we have the mountains covered with patchy lights, which being of equal intensity whether near or distant, confuse all the distances together ; while the eye, perceiving that the light falls so as to give details of solid form, yet finding nothing but insipid and formless spaces displayed by it, is compelled to suppose that the whole body of the hill is equally monotonous and devoid of character : and the effect upon it is not one whit more impressive and agreeable than might be received from a group of sand-heaps, washed into uniformity by recent rain.

Compare with this the distance of Turner in Arona. It is

§ 14. Illustrated from the works of Turner and Stanfield. The Borromean Islands of the latter.

totally impossible here to say which way the light falls on the distant hills, except by the slightly increased decision of their edges turned towards it, but the greatest attention is paid to get these edges decisive, yet full of gradation, and perfectly true in character of form. All the rest of the mountain is then indistinguishable haze, and by the bringing of these edges more and more decisively over one another, Turner has given us between the right-hand side of the picture and the snow, fifteen distinct distances, yet every one of these distances in itself palpitating, changeful, and suggesting subdivision into countless multitude. Something of this is traceable even in the engraving, and all the essential characters are perfectly well marked. I think even the least experienced eye can scarcely but feel the truth of this distance as compared with Stanfield's. In the latter, the eye gets something of the form, and therefore wonders it sees no more; the impression on it, therefore, is of hills within distinctly visible distance, indiscernible through want of light or dim atmosphere; and the effect is, of course, smallness of space, with obscurity of light and thickness of air. In Turner's the eye gets nothing of the substance, and wonders it sees so much of the outline; the impression is, therefore, of mountains too far off to be ever distinctly seen, rendered clear by brilliancy of light and purity of atmosphere; and the effect, consequently, vastness of space, with intensity of light and crystalline transparency of air.

These truths are invariably given in every one of Turner's distances, that is to say, we have always in them two principal facts forced on our notice; transparency, or filminess of mass, and excessive sharpness of edge. And I wish particularly to insist upon this sharpness of edge, because it is not a casual or changeful habit of nature; it is the unfailing characteristic of all very great distances. It is quite a mistake to suppose that slurred or melting lines are characteristic of distant *large* objects; they may be so, as before observed, (Sec. II. Chap. IV. § 4,) when the focus of the eye is not adapted to them; but, when the eye is really directed to the distance, melting lines are characteristic only of thick mist and vapor between us and the object, not of the removal of the object. If a thing has character upon its

§ 15. Turner's
Arona.

§ 16. Extreme
distance of large
objects always
characterized by
very sharp outline.

outline, as a tree for instance, or a mossy stone, the farther it is removed from us, the sharper the outline of the whole mass will become, though in doing so, the particular details which make up the character will become confused in the manner described in the same chapter. A tree fifty yards from us, taken as a mass, has a soft outline, because the leaves and interstices have some effect on the eye. But put it ten miles off against the sky, and its outline will be so sharp that you cannot tell it from a rock. There are three trees on the Mont Saleve, about five miles from Geneva, which from the city, as they stand on the ridge of the hill, are seen defined against the sky. The keenest eye in the world could not tell them from stones. So in a mountain five or six miles off, bushes, and heather, and roughnesses of knotty ground and rock, have still some effect on the eye, and by becoming confused and mingled as before described, soften the outline. But let the mountain be thirty miles off, and its edge will be as sharp as a knife. Let it, as in the case of the Alps, be seventy or eighty miles off, and though it has become so faint that the morning mist is not so transparent, its outline will be beyond all imitation for excessive sharpness. Thus, then, the character of extreme distance is always excessive keenness of edge. If you soften your outline, you either put mist between you and the object, and in doing so diminish your distance, for it is impossible you should see so far through mist as through clear air ; or, if you keep an impression of clear air, you bring the object close to the observer, diminish its size in proportion, and if the aerial colors, excessive blues, etc., be retained, represent an impossibility.

Take Claude's distance (in No. 244, Dulwich Gallery,)* on the right of the picture. It is as pure blue as ever came from the pallet, laid on thick ; you cannot see through it, there is

not the slightest vestige of transparency or filmi-
 § 17. Want of this decision in Claude. ness about it, and its edge is soft and blunt.

Hence, if it be meant for near hills, the blue is impossible, and the want of details impossible, in the clear atmosphere indicated through the whole picture. If it be meant for extreme distance, the blunt edge is impossible, and the

* One of the most genuine Claudes I know.

opacity is impossible. I do not know a single distance of the Italian school to which the same observation is not entirely applicable, except, perhaps, one or two of Nicholas Poussin's. They always involve, under any supposition whatsoever, at least two impossibilities.

I need scarcely mention in particular any more of the works of Turner, because there is not one of his mountain distances in which these facts are not fully exemplified. Look at the last vignette—the Farewell, in Rogers's Italy; observe the excessive sharpness of all the edges, almost amounting to lines, in the distance, while there is scarcely one decisive edge in the foreground. Look at the hills of the distance in the Dunstaffnage, Glencoe, and Loch Achray, (illustrations to Scott.) in the latter of which the left-hand side of the Benvenue is actually marked with a dark line. In fact, Turner's usual mode of executing these passages is perfectly evident in all his drawings; it is not often that we meet with a very broad dash of wet color in his finished works, but in these distances, as we before saw of his shadows, all the effect has been evidently given by a dash of very moist pale color, probably turning the paper upside down, so that a very firm edge may be left at the top of the mountain as the color dries. And in the Battle of Marengo we find the principle carried so far as to give nothing more than actual outline for the representation of the extreme distance, while all the other hills in the picture are distinctly darkest at the edge. This plate, though coarsely executed, is yet one of the noblest illustrations of mountain character and magnitude existing.

Such, then, are the chief characteristics of the highest peaks and extreme distances of all hills, as far as the forms of the rocks themselves, and the aerial appearances especially belonging to them, are alone concerned. There is, however, yet another point to be considered—the modification of their form caused by incumbent snow.

Pictures of winter scenery are nearly as common as moon-lights, and are usually executed by the same order of artists, that is to say, the most incapable: it being remarkably easy to represent the moon as a white wafer on a black ground, or to

§ 18. The perpetual rendering of it by Turner.

§ 19. Effects of snow, how imperfectly studied.

scratch out white branches on a cloudy sky. Nevertheless, among Flemish paintings several valuable representations of winter are to be found, and some clever pieces of effect among the moderns, as Hunt's, for instance, and De Wint's. But all such efforts end in effect alone, nor have I ever in any single instance seen a snow *wreath*, I do not say thoroughly, but even decently, drawn.

In the range of inorganic nature, I doubt if any object can be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh, deep snow-drift, seen under warm light.* Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness, its surface and transparency alike exquisite, its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish, the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly color, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light. No mortal hand can approach the majesty or loveliness of it, yet it is possible by care and skill at least to suggest the preciousness of its forms and intimate the nature of its light and shade ; but this has never been attempted ; it could not be done except by artists of a rank exceedingly high, and there is something about the feeling of snow in ordinary scenery which such men do not like. But when the same qualities are exhibited on a magnificent Alpine scale and in a position where they interfere with no feeling of life, I see not why they should be neglected, as they have hitherto been, unless that the difficulty of reconciling the brilliancy of snow with a picturesque light and shade, is so great that most good artists disguise or avoid the greater part of upper Alpine scenery, and hint at the glacier so slightly, that they do not feel the necessity of careful study of its forms. Habits of exaggeration increase the evil : I have seen a sketch from nature, by one of the most able of our landscape painters, in which a cloud had been mistaken for a snowy summit, and the hint thus taken exaggerated, as was likely, into an enormous mass of impossible height, and unintelligent form, when the mountain itself, for which the cloud had been mistaken, though subtending an angle of about eighteen or twenty degrees, instead of the fifty attributed to it, was of a form so exquisite that it

* Compare Part III. Sect. I. Chap. 9, § 5.

might have been a profitable lesson truly studied to Finidias. Nothing but failure can result from such methods of sketching, nor have I ever seen a single instance of an earnest study of snowy mountains by any one. Hence, wherever they are introduced, their drawing is utterly unintelligent, the forms being those of white rocks, or of rocks lightly powdered with snow, showing sufficiently that not only the painters have never studied the mountain carefully from below, but that they have never climbed into the snowy region. Harding's rendering of the high Alps (*vide* the engraving of Chamonix, and of the Wengern Alp, in the illustrations to Byron) is best; but even he shows no perception of the real anatomy. Stanfield paints only white rocks instead of snow. Turner invariably avoids the difficulty, though he has shown himself capable of grappling with it in the ice of the Liber Studiorum, (*Mer de Glace*), which is very cold and slippery and very like ice; but of the crusts and wreaths of the higher snow he has taken no cognizance. Even the vignettes to Rogers's Poems fail in this respect. It would be vain to attempt in this place to give any detailed account of the phenomena of the upper snows; but it may be well to note those general principles which every artist ought to keep in mind when he has to paint an Alp.

Snow is modified by the under forms of the hill in some sort. as dress is by the anatomy of the human frame. § 20. General principles of its forms on the Alps. And as no dress can be well laid on without conceiving the body beneath, so no Alp can be drawn unless its under form is conceived first, and its snow laid on afterwards.

Every high Alp has as much snow upon it as it can hold or carry. It is not, observe, a mere coating of snow of given depth throughout, but it is snow loaded on until the rocks can hold no more. The surplus does not fall in the winter, because, fastened by continual frost, the quantity of snow which an Alp can carry is greater than each single winter can bestow; it falls in the first mild days of spring in enormous avalanches. Afterwards the melting continues, gradually removing from all the steep rocks the small quantity of snow which was all they could hold, and leaving them black and bare among the accumulated fields of unknown depth, which occupy

the capacious valleys and less inclined superficies of the mountain.

Hence it follows that the deepest snow does not take nor indicate the actual forms of the rocks on which it lies, but it hangs from peak to peak in unbroken and sweeping festoons, or covers whole groups of peaks, which afford it sufficient hold, with vast and unbroken domes : these festoons and domes being guided in their curves, and modified in size, by the violence and prevalent direction of the winter winds.

We have, therefore, every variety of indication of the under mountain form : first, the mere coating, which is soon to be withdrawn, and which shows as a mere sprinkling or powdering after a storm on the higher peaks ; then the shallow incrustation on the steep sides glazed by the running down of its frequent meltings, frozen again in the night ; then the deep snow more or less cramped or modified by sudden eminences of emergent rock, or hanging in fractured festoons and huge blue irregular cliffs on the mountain flanks, and over the edges and summits of their precipices in nodding drifts, far overhanging, like a cornice, (perilous things to approach the edge of from above ; finally, the pure accumulation of overwhelming depth, smooth, sweeping, and almost cleftless, and modified only by its lines of drifting. Countless phenomena of exquisite beauty belong to each of these conditions, not to speak of the transition of the snow into ice at lower levels ; but all on which I shall at present insist is that the artist should not think of his Alp merely as a white mountain, but conceive it as a group of peaks loaded with an accumulation of snow, and that especially he should avail himself of the exquisite curvatures, never failing, by which the snow unites and opposes the harsh and broken lines of the rock. I shall enter into farther detail on this subject hereafter ; at present it is useless to do so, as I have no examples to refer to, either in ancient or modern art. No statement of these facts has hitherto been made, nor any evidence given even of their observation, except by the most inferior painters.*

Various works in green and white appear from time to time

* I hear of some study of Alpine scenery among the professors at Geneva ; but all foreign landscape that I have ever met with has been so utterly ignorant that I hope for nothing except from our own painters.

on the walls of the Academy, *like* the Alps indeed, but so frightfully like, that we shudder and sicken at the sight of them, as

§ 21. Average we do when our best friend shows us into his
 paintings of dining-room, to see a portrait of himself, which
 Switzerland. Its “everybody thinks very like.” We should be glad
 real spirit has scarcely yet been caught. to see fewer of these, for Switzerland is quite be-

yond the power of any but first-rate men, and is exceedingly bad practice for a rising artist; but, let us express a hope that Alpine scenery will not continue to be neglected as it has been, by those who alone are capable of treating it. We love Italy, but we have had rather a surfeit of it lately;—too many peaked caps and flat-headed pines. We should be very grateful to Harding and Stanfield if they would refresh us a little among the snow, and give us, what we believe them to be capable of giving us, a faithful expression of Alpine ideal. We are well aware of the pain inflicted on an artist’s mind by the preponderance of black, and white, and green, over more available colors; but there is nevertheless in generic Alpine scenery, a fountain of feeling yet unopened—a chord of harmony yet untouched by art. It will be struck by the first man who can separate what is national, in Switzerland, from what is ideal. We do not want chalets and three-legged stools, cow-bells and buttermilk. We want the pure and holy hills, treated as a link between heaven and earth.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE INFERIOR MOUNTAINS.

WE have next to investigate the character of those intermediate masses which constitute the greater part of all hill scenery, forming the outworks of the high ranges, and being almost the sole constituents of such lower groups as those of Cumberland, Scotland, or South Italy.

§ 1. The inferior mountains are distinguished from the central by being divided into beds.

All mountains whatsoever, not composed of the granite or gneiss rocks described in the preceding chapter, nor volcanic, (these latter being comparatively rare,) are composed of *beds*, not of homogeneous, heaped materials, but of accumulated layers, whether of rock or soil. It may be slate, sandstone, limestone, gravel, or clay; but whatever the substance, it is laid in layers, not in a mass. These layers are scarcely ever horizontal, and may slope to any degree, often occurring vertical, the boldness of the hill outline commonly depending in a great degree on their inclination. In consequence of this division into beds, every mountain will have two great sets of lines more or less prevailing in its contours—one indicative of the surfaces of the beds, where they come out from under each other—and the other indicative of the extremities or edges of the beds, where their continuity has been interrupted. And these two great sets of lines will commonly be at right angles with each other, or nearly so. If the surface of the bed approach a horizontal line, its termination will approach the vertical, and this is the most usual and ordinary way in which a precipice is produced.

Farther, in almost all rocks there is a third division of substance, which gives to their beds a tendency to split transversely in some directions rather than others, giving rise to what geologists call “joints,” and throwing the whole rock into blocks more or less rhomboidal; so that the beds are not terminated by torn or ragged edges, but by faces comparatively smooth and even, usually inclined to

§ 2. Farther division of these beds by joints.

each other at some definite angle. The whole arrangement may be tolerably represented by the bricks of a wall, whose tiers may be considered as strata, and whose sides and extremities will represent the joints by which those strata are divided, varying, however, their direction in different rocks, and in the same rock under differing circumstances.

Finally, in the slates, grauwackes, and some calcareous beds, in the greater number, indeed, of *mountain* rocks, we find another most conspicuous feature of general structure—the lines

§ 3. And by
lines of lamination.

of lamination, which divide the whole rock into an infinite number of delicate plates or layers, sometimes parallel to the direction or “strike” of the

strata, oftener obliquely crossing it, and sometimes, apparently, altogether independent of it, maintaining a consistent and unvarying slope through a series of beds contorted and undulating in every conceivable direction. These lines of lamination extend their influence to the smallest fragment, causing it (as, for example, common roofing slate) to break smooth in one direction, and with a ragged edge in another, and marking the faces of the beds and joints with distinct and numberless lines, commonly far more conspicuous in a near view than the larger and more important divisions.

Now, it cannot be too carefully held in mind, in examining the principles of mountain structure, that nearly all the laws of nature with respect to external form are rather universal tendencies, evidenced by a plurality of instances, than

§ 4. Variety and
seeming uncertainty
under which these laws
are manifested.

imperative necessities complied with by all. For

instance, it may be said to be a universal law with respect to the boughs of all trees that they incline their extremities more to the ground in proportion as they are lower on the trunk, and that the higher their point of insertion is, the more they share in the upward tendency of the trunk itself. But yet there is not a single group of boughs in any one tree which does not show exceptions to the rule, and present boughs lower in insertion, and yet steeper in inclination, than their neighbors. Nor is this defect or deformity, but the result of the constant habit of nature to carry variety into her very principles, and make the symmetry and beauty of her laws the more felt by the grace and accidentalism with which they are

carried out. No one familiar with foliage could doubt for an instant of the necessity of giving evidence of this downward tendency in the boughs ; but it would be nearly as great an offence against truth to make the law hold good with every individual branch, as not to exhibit its influence on the majority. Now, though the laws of mountain form are more rigid and constant than those of vegetation, they are subject to the same species of exception in carrying out. Though every mountain has these great tendencies in its lines, not one in a thousand of those lines is absolutely consistent with and obedient to this universal tendency. There are lines in every direction, and of almost every kind, but the sum and aggregate of those lines will invariably indicate the *universal* force and influence to which they are all subjected ; and of these lines there will, I repeat, be two principal sets or classes, pretty nearly at right angles with each other. When both are inclined, they give rise to peaks or ridges ; when one is nearly horizontal and the other vertical, to table-lands and precipices.

This then is the broad organization of all hills, modified afterwards by time and weather, concealed by superincumbent soil and vegetation, and ramified into minor and more delicate details in a way presently to be considered, but nevertheless universal in its great first influence, and giving to all mountains a particular cast and inclination ; like the exertion of voluntary power in a definite direction, an internal spirit, manifesting itself in every crag, and breathing in every slope, flinging and forcing the mighty mass towards the heaven with an expression and an energy like that of life.

Now, as in the case of the structure of the central peaks described above, so also here, if I had to give a clear idea of this organization of the lower hills, where it is seen in its greatest perfection, with a mere view to geological truth, I should not refer to any geological drawings, but I should take the Loch Coriskin of Turner. It has luckily been admirably engraved, and for all purposes of reasoning or form, is nearly as effective in the print as in the drawing. Looking at any group of the multitudinous lines which make up this mass of mountain, they appear to be running anywhere and everywhere ; there are none parallel to each other, none resem-

§ 5. The perfect expression of them in Turner's Loch Coriskin.

bling each other for a moment ; yet the whole mass is felt at once to be composed with the most rigid parallelism, the surfaces of the beds towards the left, their edges or escarpments towards the right. In the centre, near the top of the ridge, the edge of a bed is beautifully defined, casting its shadow on the surface of the one beneath it ; this shadow marking by three jags the chasms caused in the inferior one by three of its parallel joints. Every peak in the distance is evidently subject to the same great influence, and the evidence is completed by the flatness and evenness of the steep surfaces of the beds which rise out of the lake on the extreme right, parallel with those in the centre.

Turn to Glencoe, in the same series [the Illustrations to Scott]. We have in the mass of mountain on the left, the most beautiful indication of vertical beds of a finely laminated rock, terminated
 § 6. Glencoe and other works. by even joints towards the precipice ; while the whole sweep of the landscape, as far as the most distant peaks, is evidently governed by one great and simple tendency upwards to the left, those most distant peaks themselves lying over one another in the same direction. In the Daphne hunting with Leucippus, the mountains on the left descend in two precipices to the plain, each of which is formed by a vast escarpment of the beds whose upper surfaces are shown between the two cliffs, sinking with an even slope from the summit of the lowest to the base of the highest, under which they evidently descend, being exposed in this manner for a length of five or six miles. The same structure is shown, though with more complicated development, on the left of the Loch Katrine.

But perhaps the finest instance, or at least the most
 § 7. Especially the Mount Lebanon. marked of all, will be found in the exquisite Mount Lebanon, with the convent of St. Antonio, engraved in Finden's Bible. There is not one shade nor touch on the rock which is not indicative of the lines of stratification ; and every fracture is marked with a straightforward simplicity which makes you feel that the artist has nothing in his heart but a keen love of the pure unmodified truth ; there is no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, no apparent aim at artificial arrangement or scientific grouping ; the rocks are laid one above another with unhesitating decision ; every shade is understood in a moment, felt as a dark side, or a shadow, or a fissure, and you may step

from one block or bed to another until you reach the mountain summit. And yet, though there seems no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, see how it *is* disguised, just as nature would have done it, by the perpetual play and changefulness of the very lines which appear so parallel ; now bending a little up, or down, or losing themselves, or running into each other, the old story over and over again,—infinity. For here is still the great distinction between Turner's work and that of a common artist. Hundreds could have given the parallelism of blocks, but none but himself could have done so without the actual repetition of a single line or feature.

Now compare with this the second mountain from the left in the picture of Salvator, No. 220 in the Dulwich Gallery. The whole is first laid in with a very delicate and masterly gray, right in tone, agreeable in color, quite unobjectionable for a beginning. But how is this made into rock? On the light side Salvator gives us a multitude of touches, all exactly like one another, and therefore, it is to be hoped, quite patterns of perfection in rock-drawing, since they are too good to be even varied. Every touch is a dash of the brush, as nearly as possible in the shape of a comma, round and bright at the top, convex on its right side, concave on its left, and melting off at the bottom into the gray. These are laid in confusion one above another, some paler, some brighter, some scarcely discernible, but all alike in shape. Now, I am not aware myself of any particular object, either in earth or heaven, which these said touches do at all resemble or portray. I do not, however, assert that they may not resemble something—feathers, perhaps ; but I do say, and say with perfect confidence, that they may be Chinese for rocks, or Sanscrit for rocks, or symbolical of rocks in some mysterious and undeveloped character ; but that they are no more *like* rocks than the brush that made them. The dark sides appear to embrace and overhang the lights ; they cast no shadows, are broken by no fissures, and furnish, as food for contemplation, nothing but a series of concave curves.

Yet if we go on to No. 269, we shall find something a great deal worse. I can believe Gaspar Poussin capable of committing as much sin against nature as most people ; but I certainly

§ 8. Compared with the work of Salvator ;

do not suspect him of having had any hand in this thing, at least after he was ten years old. Nevertheless, it shows what he is supposed capable of by his admirers, and will serve for a broad illustration of all those absurdities which he himself in a less degree, and with feeling and thought to atone for them, perpetually commits. Take the white bit of rock on the opposite side of the river, just above the right arm of the Niobe, and tell me of what the square green daubs of the brush at its base can be conjectured to be typical. Rocks with pale-brown light sides, and rich green dark sides, are a phenomenon perhaps occurring in some of the improved passages of nature among our Cumberland lakes; where I remember once having seen a bed of roses, of peculiar magnificence, tastefully and artistically assisted in effect by the rocks above it being painted pink to match; but I do not think that they are a kind of thing which the clumsiness and false taste of nature can be supposed frequently to produce; even granting that these same sweeps of the brush could, by any exercise of the imagination, be conceived representative of a dark, or any other side, which is far more than I am inclined to grant; seeing that there is no east shadow, no appearance of reflected light, of substance, or of character on the edge; nothing, in short, but pure, staring green paint, scratched heavily on a white ground. Nor is there a touch in the picture more expressive. All are the mere dragging of the brush here and there and everywhere, without meaning or intention; winding, twisting, zigzagging, doing anything in fact which may serve to break up the light and destroy its breadth, without bestowing in return one hint or shadow of anything like form. This picture is, indeed, an extraordinary case, but the Salvator above mentioned is a characteristic and exceedingly favorable example of the usual mode of mountain drawing among the old landscape painters.* Their admirers may be challenged to bring forward a single instance of their expressing, or even appearing to have noted, the great laws of structure above explained. Their hills are, without exception, irregular

* I have above exhausted all terms of vituperation, and probably disgusted the reader; and yet I have not spoken with enough severity: I know not any terms of blame that are bitter enough to chastise justly the mountain drawings of Salvator in the pictures of the Pitti Palace.

earthy heaps, without energy or direction of any kind, marked with shapeless shadows and meaningless lines ; sometimes, indeed, where great sublimity has been aimed at, approximating to the pure and exalted ideal of rocks, which, in the most artistical specimens of China cups and plates, we see suspended from aerial pagodas, or balanced upon peacocks' tails, but never warranting even the wildest theorist in the conjecture that their perpetrators had ever seen a mountain in their lives. Let us, however, look farther into the modifications of character by which nature conceals the regularity of her first plan ; for although all mountains are organized as we have seen, their organization is always modified, and often nearly concealed, by changes wrought upon them by external influence.

We ought, when speaking of their stratification, to have noticed another great law, which must, however, be understood with greater latitude of application than any of the others, as very far from imperative or constant in particular cases, though universal in its influence on the aggregate of all. It is that the lines by which rocks are terminated, are always steeper and more inclined to the vertical as we approach the summit of the mountain. Thousands of cases are to be found in every group, of rocks and lines horizontal at the top of the mountain and vertical at the bottom ; but they are still the exceptions, and the average out of a given number of lines in any rock formation whatsoever, will be found increasing in perpendicularity as they rise. Consequently the great skeleton lines of rock outline are always concave ; that is to say, all distant ranges of rocky mountain approximate more or less to a series of concave curves, meeting in peaks, like a range of posts with chains hanging between. I do not say that convex forms will not perpetually occur, but that the tendency of the majority will always be to assume the form of sweeping, curved valleys, with angular peaks ; not of rounded convex summits, with angular valleys. This structure is admirably exemplified in the second vignette in Rogers's Italy, and in Piacenza.

But although this is the primary form of all hills, and that which will always cut against the sky in every distant range, there are two great influences whose tendency is directly the reverse,

§ 10. Effects of external influence on mountain form.

and which modify, to a great degree, both the evidences of stratification and this external form. These are aqueous erosion and disintegration. The latter only is to be taken into consideration when we have to do with minor features of crag ; but the former is a force in constant action—of the very utmost importance—a force to which one-half of the great outlines of all mountains is entirely owing and which has much influence upon every one of their details.

Now the tendency of aqueous action over a large elevated surface is *always* to make that surface symmetrically and evenly convex and dome-like, sloping gradually more and more as it descends, until it reaches an inclination of about 40° , at which slope it will descend perfectly straight to the valley ; for at that slope the soil washed from above will accumulate upon the hill-side, as it cannot lie in steeper beds. This influence, then, is exercised more or less on all mountains, with greater or less effect in proportion as the rock is harder or softer, more or less liable to decomposition, more or less recent in date of elevation, and more or less characteristic in its original forms ; but it universally induces, in the lower parts of mountains, a series of the most exquisitely symmetrical convex curves, terminating, as they descend to the valley, in uniform and uninterrupted slopes ; this symmetrical structure being perpetually interrupted by cliffs and projecting masses, which give evidence of the interior parallelism of the mountain anatomy, but which interrupt the convex forms more frequently by rising out of them, than by indentation.

There remains but one fact more to be noticed. All mountains, in some degree, but especially those which are composed of soft or decomposing substance, are delicately and symmetrically furrowed by the descent of streams. The traces of their action commence at the very summits, fine as threads, and multitudinous, like the uppermost branches of a delicate tree. They unite in groups as they descend, concentrating gradually into dark undulating ravines, into which the body of the mountain descends on each side, at first in a convex curve, but at the bottom with the same uniform slope on each side which it assumes in its final descent to the plain, unless the rock be very hard, when the stream will cut

§ 11. The gentle convexity caused by aqueous erosion.

§ 12. And the effect of the action of torrents.

itself a vertical chasm at the bottom of the curves, and there will be no even slope.* If, on the other hand, the rock be very soft, the slopes will increase rapidly in height and depth from day to day ; washed away at the bottom and crumbling at the top, until, by their reaching the summit of the masses of rock which separate the active torrents, the whole mountain is divided into a series of penthouse-like ridges, all guiding to its summit, and becoming steeper and narrower as they ascend ; these in their turn being divided by similar, but smaller ravines—caused in the same manner—into the same kind of ridges ; and these again by another series, the arrangement being carried finer and farther according to the softness of the rock. The south side of Saddleback, in Cumberland, is a characteristic example ; and the Montagne du Tacondy, in Chamonix, a noble instance of one of these ridges or buttresses, with all its subdivisions, on a colossal scale.

Now we wish to draw especial attention to the broad and bold simplicity of mass, and the excessive complication of details, which influences like these, acting on an enormous scale, must inevitably produce in all mountain groups ; because each individual part and promontory, being compelled to assume the same symmetrical curves as its neighbors, and to descend at precisely the same slope to the valley, falls in with their prevailing lines, and becomes a part of a great and harmonious whole, instead of an unconnected and discordant individual. It is true that each of these members has its own touches of specific character, its own projecting crags and peculiar hollows ; but by far the greater portion of its lines will be such as unite with, though they do not repeat, those of its neighbors, and carry out the evidence of one great influence and spirit to the limits of the scene. This effort is farther aided by the original unity and connection of the rocks themselves, which though it often may be violently interrupted, is never without evidence of existence ; for the very interruption itself forces the eye to feel that there is something

* Some terrific cuts and chasms of this kind occur on the north side of the Valais, from Sion to Briey. The torrent from the great Aletsch glacier descends through one of them. Elsewhere chasms may be found as narrow, but few so narrow and deep.

§ 13. The exceeding simplicity of contour caused by these influences.

to be interrupted, a sympathy and similarity of lines and fractures, which, however full of variety and change of direction,

never lose the appearance of symmetry of one kind or another. But, on the other hand, it is to be

§ 14. And multiplicity of feature.

remembered that these great sympathizing masses are not one mountain, but a thousand mountains; that they are originally composed of a multitude of separate eminences, hewn and chiselled indeed into associating form, but each retaining still its marked points and features of character,—that each of these individual members has, by the very process which assimilated it to the rest, been divided and subdivided into equally multitudinous groups of minor mountains; finally, that the whole complicated system is interrupted forever and ever by daring manifestations of the inward mountain will—by the precipice which has submitted to no modulation of the torrent, and the peak which has bowed itself to no terror of the storm. Hence we see that the same imperative laws which require perfect simplicity of mass, require infinite and termless complication of detail,—that there will not be an inch nor a hairbreadth of the gigantic heap which has not its touch of separate character, its own peculiar curve, stealing out for an instant and then melting into the common line; felt for a moment by the blue mist of the hollow beyond, then lost when it crosses the enlightened slope,—that all this multiplicity will be grouped into larger divisions, each felt by their increasing aerial perspective, and their instants of individual form, these into larger, and these into larger still, until all are merged in the great impression and prevailing energy of the two or three vast dynasties which divide the kingdom of the scene.

There is no vestige nor shadow of approach to such treatment as this in the whole compass of ancient art. Whoever the naster, his hills, wherever he has attempted them, have not the slightest trace of association or connection; they

§ 15. Both utterly neglected in ancient art.

are separate, conflicting, confused, petty and paltry heaps of earth; there is no marking of distances or divisions in their body; they may have holes in them, but no valleys,—protuberances and excrescences, but no parts; and in consequence are invariably diminutive and contemptible in their whole appearance and impression.

But look at the mass of mountain on the right in Turner's *Daphne* hunting with *Leucippus*. It is simple, broad, and united as one surge of a swelling sea ; it rises in an unbroken line along the valley, and lifts its promontories with an equal slope. But it contains in its body ten thousand hills. There is not a quarter of an inch of its surface without its suggestion of increasing distance and individual form. First, on the right, you have a range of tower-like precipices, the clinging wood climbing along their ledges and cresting their summits, white waterfalls gleaming through its leaves ; not, as in Claude's scientific ideals, poured in vast torrents over the top, and carefully keeping all the way down on the most projecting parts of the sides ; but stealing down, traced from point to point, through shadow after shadow, by their evanescent foam and flashing light,—here a wreath, and there a ray,—through the deep chasms and hollow ravines, out of which rise the soft rounded slopes of mightier mountain, surge beyond surge, immense and numberless, of delicate and gradual curve, accumulating in the sky until their garment of forest is exchanged for the shadowy fold of slumbrous morning cloud, above which the utmost silver peak shines islanded and alone. Put what mountain painting you will beside this, of any other artist, and its heights will look like mole-hills in comparison, because it will not have the unity nor the multiplicity which are in nature, and with Turner, the signs of size.

Again, in the *Avalanche* and *Inundation*, we have for the whole subject nothing but one vast bank of united mountain, and one stretch of uninterrupted valley. Though the bank is broken into promontory beyond promontory, peak above peak, each the abode of a new tempest, the arbiter of a separate desolation, divided from each other by the rushing of the snow, by the motion of the storm, by the thunder of the torrent ; the mighty unison of their dark and lofty line, the brotherhood of ages, is preserved unbroken ; and the broad valley at their feet, though measured league after league away by a thousand passages of sun and darkness, and marked with fate beyond fate of hamlet and of inhabitant, lies yet but as a straight and narrow channel, a filling furrow before the flood. Whose work will you compare with this ? *Salvator's*

§ 16. The fidelity of treatment in Turner's *Daphne* and *Leucippus*.

§ 17. And in the *Avalanche* and *Inundation*.

gray heaps of earth, seven yards high, covered with bunchy brambles, that we may be under no mistake about the size, thrown about at random in a little plain, beside a zigzagging river, just wide enough to admit of the possibility of there being fish in it, and with banks just broad enough to allow the respectable angler or hermit to sit upon them conveniently in the foreground? Is there more of nature in such paltriness, think you, than in the valley and the mountain which bend to each other like the trough of the sea; with the flank of the one swept in one surge into the height of heaven, until the pine forests lie on its immensity like the shadows of narrow clouds, and the hollow of the other laid league by league into the blue of the air, until its white villages flash in the distance only like the fall of a sunbeam?

But let us examine by what management of the details themselves this wholeness and vastness of effect are given. We have just seen (§ 11) that it is impossible for the slope of a mountain,

§ 18. The rarity among secondary hills of steep slopes or high precipices.

not actually a precipice of rock, to exceed 35° or 40° , and that by far the greater part of all hill-surface is composed of graceful curves of much less degree than this, reaching 40° only as their ultimate and utmost inclination. It must be farther observed that the interruptions to such curves, by precipices or steps, are always small in proportion to the slopes themselves. Precipices rising vertically more than 100 feet are very rare among the secondary hills of which we are speaking. I am not aware of any cliff in England or Wales where a plumb-line can swing clear for 200 feet; and even although sometimes, with intervals, breaks, and steps, we get perhaps 800 feet of a slope of 60° or 70° , yet not only are these cases very rare, but even these have little influence on the great contours of a mountain 4000 or 5000 feet in elevation, being commonly balanced by intervals of ascent not exceeding 6° or 8° . The result of which is, first, that the peaks and precipices of a mountain appear as little more than jags or steps emerging from its great curves; and, secondly, that the bases of all hills are enormously extensive as compared with their elevation, so that there must be always a horizontal distance between the observer and the summit five or six times exceeding the perpendicular one.

Now it is evident, that whatever the actual angle of elevation of the mountain may be, every exhibition of this horizontal distance between us and the summit is an addition to its height,

§ 19. And consequent expression of horizontal distance in their ascent.

and of course to its impressiveness ; while every endeavor to exhibit its slope as steep and sudden, is diminution at once of its distance and elevation.

In consequence nature is constantly endeavoring to impress upon us this horizontal distance, which, even in spite of all her means of manifesting it, we are apt to forget or underestimate ; and all her noblest effects depend on the full measurement and feeling of it. And it is to the abundant and marvellous expression of it by Turner, that I would direct especial attention, as being that which is in itself demonstrative of the highest knowledge and power—knowledge, in the constant use of lines of subdued slope in preference to steep or violent ascents, and in the perfect subjection of all such features, when they necessarily occur, to the larger masses ; and power, in the inimitable statements of retiring space by mere painting of surface details, without the aid of crossing shadows, divided forms, or any other artifice.

The Caudebec, in the Rivers of France, is a fine instance of almost every fact which we have been pointing out. We have in it, first, the clear expression of what takes place constantly

§ 20. Full statement of all these facts in various works of Turner, Caudebec, etc.

among hills,—that the river, as it passes through the valley, will fall backwards and forwards from side to side, lying first, if I may so speak, with all its weight against the hills on the one side, and

then against those on the other ; so that, as here it is exquisitely told, in each of its circular sweeps the whole force of its current is brought deep and close to the bases of the hills, while the water on the side next the plain is shallow, deepening gradually. In consequence of this, the hills are cut away at their bases by the current, so that their slopes are interrupted by precipices mouldering to the water. Observe first, how nobly Turner has given us the perfect unity of the whole mass of hill, making us understand that every ravine in it has been cut gradually by streams. The first eminence, beyond the city, is not disjointed from, or independent of, the one succeeding, but evidently part of the same whole, originally united, separated only by the

action of the stream between. The association of the second and third is still more clearly told, for we see that there has been a little longitudinal valley running along the brow of their former united mass, which, after the ravine had been cut between, formed the two jags which Turner has given us at the same point in each of their curves. This great triple group has, however, been originally distinct from those beyond it; for we see that these latter are only the termination of the enormous even slope, which appears again on the extreme right, having been interrupted by the rise of the near hills. Observe how the descent of the whole series is kept gentle and subdued, never suffered to become steep except where it has been cut away by the river, the sudden precipice caused by which is exquisitely marked in the last two promontories, where they are defined against the bright horizon; and, finally, observe how, in the ascent of the nearest eminence beyond the city, without one cast shadow or any division of distances, every yard of surface is felt to be retiring by the mere painting of its details,—how we are permitted to walk up it, and along its top, and are carried, before we are half way up, a league or two forward into the picture. The difficulty of doing this, however, can scarcely be appreciated except by an artist.

I do not mean to assert that this great painter is acquainted with the geological laws and facts he has thus illustrated: I am not aware whether he be or not; I merely wish to demonstrate,

in points admitting of demonstration, that intense observation of, and strict adherence to truth,

which it is impossible to demonstrate in its less tangible and more delicate manifestations. However I may *feel* the truth of every touch and line, I cannot *prove* truth, except in large and general features; and I leave it to the arbitration of every man's reason, whether it be not likely that the painter who is thus so rigidly faithful in great things that every one of his pictures might be the illustration of a lecture on the physical sciences, is not likely to be faithful also in small.

Honfleur, and the scene between Clairmont and Mauves, supply us with farther instances of the same grand simplicity of treatment; and the latter is especially remarkable for its expression of the furrowing of the hills by descending water, in

§ 21. The use of considering geological truths.

the complete roundness and symmetry of their curves, and in the delicate and sharp shadows which are cast in the undulating ravines. It is interesting to compare with either of these noble works such hills as those of Claude, on the left of the picture marked 260 in the Dulwich Gallery. There is no detail nor surface in one of them ; not an inch of ground for us to stand upon ; we must either sit astride upon the edge, or fall to the bottom. I could not point to a more complete instance of mountain calumny ; nor can I oppose it more completely, in every circumstance, than with the Honfleur of Turner, already mentioned ; in which there is not one edge nor division admitted, and yet we are permitted to climb up the hill from the town, and pass far into the mist along its top, and so descend mile after mile along the ridge to seaward, until, without one break in the magnificent unity of progress, we are carried down to the utmost horizon. And contrast the brown paint of Claude, which you can only guess to be meant for rock or soil because it is brown, with Turner's profuse, pauseless richness of feature, carried through all the enormous space—the unmeasured wealth of exquisite detail, over which the mind can dwell, and walk, and wander, and feast forever, without finding either one break in its vast simplicity, or one vacuity in its exhaustless splendor.

But these, and hundreds of others which it is sin not to dwell upon—wooded hills and undulating moors of North England—rolling surges of park and forest of the South—soft and vine-clad ranges of French coteaux, casting their oblique shadows on silver leagues of glancing rivers,—and olive-whitened promontories of Alp and Apennine, are only instances of Turner's management of the lower and softer hills. In the bolder examples of his powers, where he is dealing with lifted masses of enormous mountain, we shall still find him as cautious in his use of violent slopes or vertical lines, and still as studied in his expression of retiring surface. We never get to the top of one of his hills without being tired with our walk ; not by the steepness, observe, but by the stretch ; for we are carried up towards the heaven by such delicate gradation of line, that we scarcely feel that we have left the earth before we find ourselves among the

§ 22. Expression of retiring surface by Turner contrasted with the work of Claude.

§ 23. The same moderation of slope in the contours of his higher hills.

clouds. The Skiddaw, in the illustrations to Scott, is a noble instance of this majestic moderation. The mountain lies in the morning light, like a level vapor ; its gentle lines of ascent are scarcely felt by the eye : it rises without effort or exertion, by the mightiness of its mass ; every slope is full of slumber ; and we know not how it has been exalted, until we find it laid as a floor for the walking of the eastern clouds. So again in the Fort Augustus, where the whole elevation of the hills depends on the soft lines of swelling surface which undulate back through leagues of mist carrying us unawares higher and higher above the diminished lake, until, when we are all but exhausted with the endless distance, the mountains make their last spring, and bear us, in that instant of exertion, half way to heaven.

I ought perhaps rather to have selected, as instances of mountain form, such elaborate works as the Oberwesel or Lake of Uri, but I have before expressed my dislike of speaking of such mag-

§ 24. The peculiar difficulty of investigating the more essential truths of hill outline.

nificent pictures as these by parts. And indeed all proper consideration of the hill drawing of Turner must be deferred until we are capable of testing it by the principles of beauty ; for, after all, the most essential qualities of line,—those on which all right delineation of mountain character must depend, are those which are only to be explained or illustrated by appeals to our feeling of what is beautiful. There is an expression and a feeling about all the hill lines of nature, which I think I shall be able, hereafter, to explain ; but it is not to be reduced to line and rule—not to be measured by angles or described by compasses—not to be clipped out by the geologist, or equated by the mathematician. It is intangible, incalculable—a thing to be felt, not understood—to be loved, not comprehended—a music of the eyes, a melody of the heart, whose truth is known only by its sweetness.

I can scarcely, without repeating myself to tediousness, enter at present into proper consideration of the mountain drawing of other modern painters. We have, fortunately, several by whom

§ 25. Works of other modern artists. Clarkson Stanfield.

the noble truths which we have seen so fully exemplified by Turner are also deeply felt and faithfully rendered ; though there is a necessity, for the perfect statement of them, of such an unison of freedom of thought with perfect mastery over the greatest mechanical difficulties, as

we can scarcely hope to see attained by more than one man in our age. Very nearly the same words which we used in reference to Stanfield's drawings of the central clouds, might be applied to his rendering of mountain truth. He occupies exactly the same position with respect to other artists in earth as in cloud. None can be said really to *draw* the mountain as he will, to have so perfect a mastery over its organic development; but there is, nevertheless, in all his works, some want of feeling and individuality. He has studied and mastered his subject to the bottom, but he trusts too much to that past study, and rather invents his hills from his possessed stores of knowledge, than expresses in them the fresh ideas received from nature. Hence, in all that he does, we feel a little too much that the hills are his own. We cannot swear to their being the particular crags and individual promontories which break the cone of Ischia, or shadow the waves of Maggiore. We are nearly sure, on the contrary, that nothing but the outline is local, and that all the filling up has been done in the study. Now, we have already shown (Sect. I. Chap. III.) that particular truths are more important than general ones, and this is just one of the cases in which that rule especially applies. Nothing is so great a sign of truth and beauty in mountain drawing as the appearance of individuality—nothing is so great a proof of real imagination and invention, as the appearance that nothing has been imagined or invented. We ought to feel of every inch of mountain, that it *must* have existence in reality, that if we had lived near the place we should have known every crag of it, and that there must be people to whom every crevice and shadow of the picture is fraught with recollections, and colored with associations. The moment the artist can make us feel this—the moment he can make us think that *he* has done nothing, that nature has done all—that moment he becomes ennobled, he proves himself great. As long as we remember him, we cannot respect him. We honor him most when we most forget him. He becomes great when he becomes invisible. And we may, perhaps, be permitted to express our hope that Mr. Stanfield will—our conviction that he must—if he would advance in his rank as an artist, attend more to local character, and give us generally less of

§ 26. Importance of particular and individual truth in hill drawing.

the Stanfield limestone. He ought to study with greater attention the rocks which afford finer divisions and more delicate parts (slates and gneiss ;) and he ought to observe more fondly and faithfully those beautiful laws and lines of swell and curvature, by intervals of which nature sets off and relieves the energy of her peaked outlines. He is at present apt to be too rugged, and, in consequence, to lose size. Of his best manner of drawing hills, I believe I can scarcely give a better example than the rocks of Suli, engraved in Finden's illustrations to Byron. It is very grand and perfect in all parts and points.

Copley Fielding is peculiarly graceful and affectionate in his drawing of the inferior mountains. But as with his clouds so with his hills ; as long as he keeps to silvery films of misty outline, or purple shadows mingled with the evening light, he is true and beautiful ; but the moment he withdraws the mass out of its veiling mystery, he is lost. His worst drawings, therefore, are those on which he has spent most time ; for he is sure to show weakness wherever he gives detail. We believe that all his errors proceed, as we observed before, from his not working with the chalk or pencil ; and that if he would paint half the number of pictures in the year which he usually produces, and spend his spare time in hard dry study of forms, the half he painted would be soon worth double the present value of all. For he really has deep and genuine feeling of hill character—a far higher perception of space, elevation, incorporeal color, and all those qualities which are the poetry of mountains, than any other of our water-color painters ; and it is an infinite pity that he should not give to these delicate feelings the power of realization, which might be attained by a little labor. A few thorough studies of his favorite mountains, Ben-Venue or Ben-Cruachan, in clear, strong, front chiaroscuro, allowing himself neither color nor mist, nor any means of getting over the ground but downright drawing, would, we think, open his eyes to sources of beauty of which he now takes no cognizance. He ought not, however, to repeat the same subjects so frequently, as the casting about of the mind for means of varying them blunts the feelings to truth. And he should remember that an artist, who is not making progress, is nearly certain to be retrograding ; and that progress is not to be

§ 27. Works of
Copley Fielding.
His hill feeling.

made by working in the study, or by mere labor bestowed on the repetition of unchanging conceptions.

J. D. Harding would paint mountains very nobly, if he made them of more importance in his compositions. but they are usually little more than backgrounds for his foliage or buildings; and it is his present system to make his backgrounds very slight. His color is very beautiful: indeed, both his and Fielding's are far more refined than Stanfield's. We wish he would oftener take up some wild subject dependent for interest on its mountain forms alone, as we should anticipate the highest results from his perfect drawing; and we think that such an exercise, occasionally gone completely through, would counteract a tendency which we perceive in his present distances, to become a little thin and cutting, if not incomplete.

The late G. Robson was a man most thoroughly acquainted with all the characteristics of our own island hills: and some of the outlines of John Varley showed very grand feeling of energy of form.

§ 28. Works of
J. D. Harding
and others.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE FOREGROUND.

WE have now only to observe the close characteristics of the rocks and soils to which the large masses of which we have been speaking, owe their ultimate characters.

§ 1. What rocks were the chief components of ancient landscape foreground.

We have already seen that there exists a marked distinction between those stratified rocks whose beds are amorphous and without subdivision, as many limestones and sandstones, and those which are divided by lines of lamination, as all slates. The last kind of rock is the more frequent in nature, and forms the greater part of all hill scenery; it has, however, been successfully grappled with by few, even of the moderns, except Turner; while there is no single example of any aim at it or thought of it among the ancients, whose foregrounds, as far as it is possible to guess at their intention through their concentrated errors, are chosen from among the tufa and travertin of the lower Apennines, (the ugliest as well as the least characteristic rocks of nature,) and whose larger features of rock scenery, if we look at them with a predetermination to find in them a resemblance of *something*, may be pronounced at least liker the mountain limestone than anything else. I shall glance, therefore, at the general characters of these materials first, in order that we may be able to appreciate the fidelity of rock-drawing on which Salvator's reputation has been built.

The massive limestones separate generally into irregular blocks, tending to the form of cubes or parallelopipeds, and terminated by tolerably smooth planes. The weather, acting on the edges of these blocks, rounds them off; but the frost, which, while it cannot penetrate nor split the body of the stone, acts energetically on the angles, splits off the rounded fragments, and supplies sharp, fresh, and complicated edges.

§ 2. Salvator's limestones. The real characters of the rock. Its fractures and obtuseness of angles.

Hence the angles of such blocks are usually marked by a series of steps and fractures, in which the peculiar character of the rock is most distinctly seen ; the effect being increased in many limestones by the interposition of two or three thinner beds between the large strata of which the block has been a part ; these thin laminae breaking easily, and supplying a number of fissures and lines at the edge of the detached mass. Thus, as a general principle, if a rock have character anywhere, it will be on the angle, and however even and smooth its great planes may be, it will usually break into variety where it turns a corner. In one of the most exquisite pieces of rock truth ever put on canvas, the foreground of the Napoleon in the Academy, 1842, this principle was beautifully exemplified in the complicated fractures of the upper angle just where it turned from the light, while the planes of the rock were varied only by the modulation they owed to the waves. It follows from this structure that the edges of all rock being partially truncated, first by large fractures, and then by the rounding of the fine edges of these by the weather, perpetually present *convex* transitions from the light to the dark side, the planes of the rock almost always swelling a little *from* the angle.

Now it will be found throughout the works of Salvator, that his most usual practice was to give a *concave* sweep of the brush for his first expression of the dark side, leaving the paint darkest towards the light ; by which daring and original method of procedure he has succeeded in covering his foregrounds with forms which approximate to those of drapery, of ribbons, of crushed cocked hats, of locks of hair, of waves, leaves, or anything, in short, flexible or tough, but which of course are not only unlike, but directly contrary to the forms which nature has impressed on rocks.*

§ 3. Salvator's acute angles caused by the meeting of concave curves.

* I have cut out a passage in this place which insisted on the *angular* character of rocks,—not because it was false, but because it was incomplete, and I cannot explain it nor complete it without example. It is not the absence of curves, but the suggestion of *hardness through* curves, and of the under tendencies of the inward structure, which form the true characteristics of rock form ; and Salvator, whom neither here nor elsewhere I have abused enough, is not wrong because he paints curved rocks, but because his curves are the curves of ribbons and not of rocks ; and the differ-

And the circular and sweeping strokes or stains which are dashed at random over their surfaces, only fail of destroying all resemblance whatever to rock structure from their frequent

§ 4. Peculiar distinctness of light and shade in the rocks of nature. want of any meaning at all, and from the impossibility of our supposing any of them to be representative of shade. Now, if there be any part of

landscape in which nature develops her principles of light and shade more clearly than another, it is rock; for the dark sides of fractured stone receive brilliant reflexes from the lighted surfaces, on which the shadows are marked with the most exquisite precision, especially because, owing to the parallelism of cleavage, the surfaces lie usually in directions nearly parallel. Hence every crack and fissure has its shadow and reflected light separated with the most delicious distinctness, and the organization and solid form of all parts are told with a decision of language, which, to be followed with anything like fidelity, requires the most transparent color, and the most delicate

§ 5. Peculiar confusion of both in the rocks of Salvator. and scientific drawing. So far are the works of the old landscape-painters from rendering this, that it is exceedingly rare to find a single passage

in which the shadow can even be distinguished from the dark side—they scarcely seem to know the one to be darker than the other; and the strokes of the brush are not used to explain or express a form known or conceived, but are dashed and daubed about without any aim beyond the covering of the canvas. “A rock,” the old masters appear to say to themselves, “is a great irregular, formless, characterless lump; but it must have shade upon it, and any gray marks will do for that shade.”

§ 6. And total want of any expression of hardness or brittleness. Finally, while few, if any, of the rocks of nature are untraversed by delicate and slender fissures, whose black sharp lines are the only means by which the peculiar quality in which rocks most differ from

ence between rock curvature and other curvature I cannot explain verbally, but I hope to do it hereafter by illustration: and, at present, let the reader study the rock-drawing of the Mont St. Gothard subject, in the *Liber Studiorum*, and compare it with any examples of Salvator to which he may happen to have access. All the account of rocks here given is altogether inadequate, and I only do not alter it because I first wish to give longer study to the subject.

the other objects of the landscape, brittleness, can be effectually suggested, we look in vain among the blots and stains with which the rocks of ancient art are loaded, for any vestige or appearance of fissure or splintering. Toughness and malleability appear to be the qualities whose expression is most aimed at ;

§ 7. Instances in particular pictures. sometimes sponginess, softness, flexibility, tenuity, and occasionally transparency. Take, for instance,

the foreground of Salvator, in No. 220 of the Dulwich Gallery. There is, on the right-hand side of it, an object, which I never walk through the room without contemplating for a minute or two with renewed solicitude and anxiety of mind, indulging in a series of very wild and imaginative conjectures as to its probable or possible meaning. I think there is reason to suppose that the artist intended it either for a very large stone, or for the trunk of a tree ; but any decision as to its being either one or the other of these must, I conceive, be the extreme of rashness. It melts into the ground on one side, and might reasonably be conjectured to form a part of it, having no trace of woody structure or color ; but on the other side it presents a series of concave curves, interrupted by cogs like those of a water-wheel, which the boldest theorist would certainly not feel himself warranted in supposing symbolical of rock. The forms which this substance, whatever it be, assumes, will be found repeated, though in a less degree, in the foreground of No. 159, where they are evidently meant for rock.

Let us contrast with this system of rock-drawing, the faithful, scientific, and dexterous studies of nature which we find in the works of Clarkson Stanfield. He is a man especially to be opposed to the old masters, because he usually con-

§ 8. Compared with the works of Stanfield. fines himself to the same rock subjects as they—

the mouldering and furrowed crags of the secondary formation which arrange themselves more or less into broad and simple masses ; and in the rendering of these it is impossible to go beyond him. Nothing can surpass his care, his firmness, or his success, in marking the distinct and sharp light and shade by which the form is explained, never confusing it with local color, however richly his surface-texture may be given ; while the wonderful play of line with which he will vary, and through which he will indicate, the regularity of stratifica-

tion, is almost as instructive as that of nature herself. I cannot point to any of his works as better or more characteristic than others; but his Ischia, in the present British Institution, may be taken as a fair average example. The Botallack Mine, Cornwall, engraved in the Coast Scenery, gives us a very finished and generic representation of rock, whose primal organization has been violently affected by external influences. We have the stratification and cleavage indicated at its base, every fissure being sharp, angular, and decisive, disguised gradually as it rises by the rounding of the surface and the successive furrows caused by the descent of streams. But the exquisite drawing of the foreground is especially worthy of notice. No huge concave sweeps of the brush, no daubing or splashing here. Every inch of it is brittle and splintery, and the fissures are explained to the eye by the most perfect, speaking light and shade,—we can stumble over the edges of them. The East Cliff, Hastings, is another very fine example, from the exquisite irreg-

§ 9. Their absolute
opposition in ev-
ery particular.

ularity with which its squareness of general structure is varied and disguised. Observe how totally contrary every one of its lines is to the absurdities of Salvator. Stanfield's are all angular and straight, every apparent curve made up of right lines, while Salvator's are all sweeping and flourishing like so much penmanship. Stanfield's lines pass away into delicate splintery fissures. Salvator's are broad daubs throughout. Not one of Stanfield's lines is like another. Every one of Salvator's mocks all the rest. All Stanfield's curves, where his universal angular character is massed, as on the left-hand side, into large sweeping forms, are convex. Salvator's are every one concave.

The foregrounds of J. D. Harding and rocks of his middle distances are also thoroughly admirable. He is not quite so various and undulating in his line as Stanfield, and sometimes, in his middle distances, is wanting in solidity, § 10. The rocks
of J. D. Harding. owing to a little confusion of the dark side and shadow with each other, or with the local color. But his work, in near passages of fresh-broken, sharp-edged rock, is absolute perfection, excelling Stanfield in the perfect freedom and facility with which his fragments are splintered and scattered; true in every line without the least apparent effort. Stanfield's best

works are laborious, but Harding's rocks fall from under his hand as if they had just crashed down the hill-side, flying on the instant into lovely form. In color also he incomparably surpasses Stanfield, who is apt to verge upon mud, or be cold in his gray. The rich, lichenous, and changeful warmth, and delicate weathered grays of Harding's rock, illustrated as they are by the most fearless, firm, and unerring drawing, render his wild pieces of torrent shore the finest things, next to the work of Turner, in English foreground art.

J. B. Pyne has very accurate knowledge of limestone rock, and expresses it clearly and forcibly; but it is much to be regretted that this clever artist appears to be losing all sense of color and is getting more and more mannered in execution, evidently never studying from nature except with the previous determination to *Pyne* everything.*

Before passing to Turner, let us take one more glance at the foregrounds of the old masters, with reference, not to their management of rock, which is comparatively a rare component part of their foregrounds, but to the common soil which they were obliged to paint constantly, and whose forms and appearances are the same all over the world. A steep bank of loose earth of any kind, that has been at all exposed to the weather, contains in it, though it may not

§ 11. Characters
of loose earth and
soil.

* A passage which I happened to see in an Essay of Mr. Pyne's, in the Art-Union, about nature's "foisting rubbish" upon the artist, sufficiently explains the cause of this decline. If Mr. Pyne will go to nature, as all great men have done, and as all men who mean to be great must do, that is not merely to be *helped*, but to be *taught* by her; and will once or twice take her gifts, without looking them in the mouth, he will most assuredly find—and I say this in no unkind or depreciatory feeling, for I should say the same of all artists who are in the habit of only sketching nature, and not studying her—that *her* worst is better than *his* best. I am quite sure that if Mr. Pyne, or any other painter who has hitherto been very careful in his choice of subject, will go into the next turnpike-road, and taking the first four trees that he comes to in the hedge, give them a day each, drawing them *leaf for leaf*, as far as may be, and even their smallest boughs with as much care as if they were rivers, or an important map of a newly-surveyed country, he will find, when he has brought them all home, that at least three out of the four are better than the best he ever invented. Compare Part III. Sect. I. Chap. III. § 12, 13, (the reference in the note ought to be to Chap. XV § 7.)

be three feet high, features capable of giving high gratification to a careful observer. It is almost a fac-simile of a mountain slope of soft and decomposing rock ; it possesses nearly as much variety of character, and is governed by laws of organization no less rigid. It is furrowed in the first place by undulating lines, by the descent of the rain, little ravines, which are cut precisely at the same slope as those of the mountain, and leave ridges scarcely less graceful in their contour, and beautifully sharp in their chiselling. Where a harder knot of ground or a stone oc-

§ 12. Its exceeding grace and fullness of feature.

curs, the earth is washed from beneath it, and accumulates above it, and there we have a little precipice connected by a sweeping curve at its summit with the great slope, and casting a sharp dark shadow ; where the soil has been soft, it will probably be washed away underneath until it gives way, and leaves a jagged, hanging, irregular line of fracture ; and all these circumstances are explained to the eye in sunshine with the most delicious clearness ; every touch of shadow being expressive of some particular truth of structure, and bearing witness to the symmetry into which the whole mass has been reduced. Where this operation has gone on long, and vegetation has assisted in softening the outlines, we have our ground brought into graceful and irregular curves, of infinite variety, but yet always so connected with each other, and guiding to each other, that the eye never feels them as *separate* things, nor feels inclined to count them, nor perceives a likeness in one to the other ; they are not repetitions of each other, but are different parts of one system. Each would be imperfect without the one next to it.

Now it is all but impossible to express distinctly the particulars wherein this fine character of curve consists, and to show in definite examples, what it is which makes one representation right, and another wrong. The ground of Teniers, for instance, in No. 139 in the Dulwich Gallery, is an example of all that is wrong. It is a representation of the forms of shaken and disturbed soil, such as we should see here and there after an earthquake, or over the ruins of fallen buildings. It has not one contour nor character of the soil of nature, and yet I can scarcely tell you why, except that the curves repeat one another, and are monotonous in their flow.

§ 13. The ground of Teniers.

and are unbroken by the delicate angle and momentary pause with which the feeling of nature would have touched them, and are disunited ; so that the eye leaps from this to that, and does not pass from one to the other without being able to stop, drawn on by the continuity of line ; neither is there any undulation or furrowing of watermark, nor in one spot or atom of the whole surface, is there distinct explanation of form to the eye by means of a determined shadow. All is mere sweeping of the brush over the surface with various ground colors, without a single indication of character by means of real shade.

Let not these points be deemed unimportant ; the truths of form in common ground are quite as valuable, (let me anticipate myself for a moment,) quite as beautiful, as any others which nature presents, and in lowland landscape they present us with a species of line which it is quite impossible to obtain in any other way,—the alternately flowing and broken line of mountain scenery, which, however small its scale, is always of inestimable value, contrasted with the repetitions of organic form which we are compelled to give in vegetation. A really great artist dwells on every inch of exposed soil with care and delight, and renders it one of the most essential, speaking and pleasurable parts of his composition. And be it remembered, that the man who, in the most conspicuous part of his foreground, will violate truth with every stroke of the pencil, is not likely to be more careful in other parts of it ; and that in the little bits which I fix upon for animadversion, I am not pointing out solitary faults, but only the most characteristic examples of the falsehood which is everywhere, and which renders the whole foreground one mass of contradictions and absurdities. Nor do I myself

§ 14. Importance of these minor parts and points.
 § 15. The observance of them is the real distinction between the master and the novice.
 see wherein the great difference lies between a master and a novice, except in the rendering of the finer truths, of which I am at present speaking.

To handle the brush freely, and to paint grass and weeds with accuracy enough to satisfy the eye, are accomplishments which a year or two's practice will give any man ; but to trace among the grass and weeds those mysteries of invention and combination, by which nature appeals to the intellect—to render the delicate fissure, and descending curve, and undulating shadow

of the mouldering soil, with gentle and fine finger, like the touch of the rain itself—to find even in all that appears most trifling or contemptible, fresh evidence of the constant working of the Divine power “for glory and for beauty,” and to teach it and proclaim it to the unthinking and the unregardless—this, as it is the peculiar province and faculty of the master-mind, so it is the peculiar duty which is demanded of it by the Deity.

It would take me no reasonable nor endurable time, if I were to point out one half of the various kinds and classes of falsehood which the inventive faculties of the old masters succeeded

§ 16. The ground in originating, in the drawing of foregrounds. It of Cuypp. is not this man, nor that man, nor one school nor

another ; all agree in entire repudiation of everything resembling facts, and in the high degree of absurdity of what they substitute for them. Even Cuypp, who evidently saw and studied *near* nature, as an artist should do—not fishing for idealities, but taking what nature gave him, and thanking her for it—even he appears to have supposed that the drawing of the earth might be trusted to chance or imagination, and, in consequence, strews

§ 17. And of his banks with lumps of dough, instead of stones. Claude.

Perhaps, however, the “beautiful foregrounds” of Claude afford the most remarkable instances of childishness and incompetence of all. That of his morning landscape, with the large group of trees and high single-arched bridge, in the National Gallery, is a pretty fair example of the kind of error which he constantly falls into. I will not say anything of the agreeable composition of the three banks, rising one behind another from the water. I merely affirm that it amounts to a demonstration that all three were painted in the artist’s study, without any reference to nature whatever. In fact, there is quite enough intrinsic evidence in each of them to prove this, seeing that what appears to be meant for vegetation upon them, amounts to nothing more than a green stain on their surfaces, the more evidently false because the leaves of the trees twenty yards farther off are all perfectly visible and distinct ; and that the sharp lines with which each cuts against that beyond it, are not only such as crumbling earth could never show or assume, but are maintained through their whole progress ungraduated, unchanging, and unaffected by any of the circumstances of vary-

ing shade to which every one of nature's lines is inevitably subjected. In fact, the whole arrangement is the impotent struggle of a tyro to express, by successive edges, that approach of earth which he finds himself incapable of expressing by the drawing of the surface. Claude wished to make you understand that the edge of his pond came nearer and nearer : he had probably often tried to do this with an unbroken bank, or a bank only varied by the delicate and harmonized anatomy of nature ; and he had found that owing to his total ignorance of the laws of perspective, such efforts on his part invariably ended in his reducing his pond to the form of a round O, and making it look perpendicular. Much comfort and solace of mind, in such unpleasant circumstances, may be derived from instantly dividing the obnoxious bank into a number of successive promontories, and developing their edges with completeness and intensity. Every school-girl's drawing, as soon as her mind has arrived at so great a degree of enlightenment as to perceive that perpendicular water is objectionable, will supply us with edifying instances of this unfailing resource ; and this foreground of Claude's is only one out of the thousand cases in which he has been reduced to it.

§ 18. The entire weakness and childishness of the latter. And if it be asked, how the proceeding differs from that of nature, I have only to point to nature herself, as she is drawn in the foreground of Turner's Mercury and Argus, a case precisely similar to Claude's, of earthy crumbling banks cut away by water. It will be found in this picture (and I am now describing nature's work and Turner's with the same words) that the whole distance is given by retirement of solid surface ; and that if ever an edge is expressed, it is only felt for an instant, and then lost again ; so that the eye cannot stop at it and prepare for a long jump to another like it, but is guided over it, and round it, into the hollow beyond ; and thus the whole receding mass of ground, going back for more than a quarter of a mile, is made completely *one*—no part of it is separated from the rest for an instant—it is all united, and its modulations are *members*, not *divisions* of its mass. But those modulations are countless—heaving here, sinking there—now swelling, now mouldering, now blending, now breaking—giving, in fact, to the foreground

§ 19. Compared with the work of Turner.

of this universal master, precisely the same qualities which we have before seen in his hills, as Claude gave to his foreground precisely the same qualities which we had before found in *his* hills,—infinite unity in the one case, finite division in the other.

Let us, then, having now obtained some insight into the principles of the old masters in foreground drawing, contrast them throughout with those of our great modern master. The

investigation of the excellence of Turner's drawing becomes shorter and easier as we proceed, because the great distinctions between his work and that of other painters are the same, whatever the object or subject may be; and after once showing the general characters of the particular specific forms under consideration, we have only to point, in the works of Turner, to the same principles of infinity and variety in carrying them out, which we have before insisted upon with reference to other subjects.

The Upper Fall of the Tees, Yorkshire, engraved in the England series, may be given as a standard example of rock-drawing to be opposed to the work of Salvator. We have, in the

great face of rock which divides the two streams, horizontal lines which indicate the real direction of the strata, and these same lines are given in

ascending perspective all along the precipice on the right. But we see also on the central precipice fissures absolutely vertical, which inform us of one series of joints dividing these horizontal strata; and the exceeding smoothness and evenness of the precipice itself inform us that it has been caused by a great separation of substance in the direction of another more important line of joints, running in a direction across the river. Accordingly, we see on the left that the whole summit of the precipice is divided again and again by this great series of joints into vertical beds, which lie against each other with their sides towards us, and are traversed downwards by the same vertical lines traceable on the face of the central cliff. Now, let me direct especial attention to the way in which Turner has marked over this general and grand unity of structure, the modifying effects of the weather and the torrent. Observe

how the whole surface of the hill above the precipice

§ 20. General features of Turner's foreground.

§ 21. Geological structure of his rocks in the Fall of the Tees.

§ 22. Their convex surfaces and fractured edges.

pice on the left * is brought into one smooth, unbroken curvature of gentle convexity, until it comes to the edge of the precipice, and then, just on the angle, (compare § 2,) breaks into the multiplicity of fissure which marks its geological structure. Observe how every one of the separate blocks, into which it divides, is rounded and convex in its salient edges turned to the weather, and how every one of their inward angles is marked clear and sharp by the determined shadow and transparent reflex. Observe how exquisitely graceful are all the curves of the convex surfaces, indicating that every one of them has been modelled by the winding and undulating of running water ; and how gradually they become steeper as they descend, until they are torn down into the face of the precipice. Finally, § 23. And perfect unity. observe the exquisite variety of all the touches which express fissure or shade ; every one in varying directions and with new forms, and yet throughout indicating that perfect parallelism which at once explained to us the geology of the rock, and falling into one grand mass, treated with the same simplicity of light and shade which a great portrait painter adopts in treating the features of the human face ; which, though each has its own separate chiaroscuro, never disturb the wholeness and grandeur of the head, considered as one ball or mass. So here, one deep and marked piece of shadow indicates the greatest proximity of the rounded mass ; and from this every shade becomes fainter and fainter, until all are lost in the obscurity and dimness of the hanging precipice and the shattering fall. Again, see how the same fractures just upon the edge take place with the central cliff above the right-hand fall, and how the force of the water is told us by the confusion of débris accumulated in its channel. In fact, the great quality about Turner's drawings which more especially proves their transcendent truth, is the capability they afford us of reasoning on past and future phenomena, just as if we had the actual rocks before us ; for this indicates not that one truth is given, nor another, not that a pretty or interesting morsel has been selected here and there, but that the whole truth has been given, with all the relations of its parts ; so that we can pick and choose our points of pleas-

* In the light between the waterfall and the large dark mass on the extreme right.

are or of thought for ourselves, and reason upon the whole with the same certainty which we should after having climbed and

hammered over the rocks bit by bit. With this draw-

ing before him, a geologist could give a lecture upon the whole system of aqueous erosion, and speculate

as safely upon the past and future states of this very spot, as if he were standing and getting wet with the spray.

He would tell you, at once, that the waterfall was in a state of rapid recession ; that it had once formed a wide cataract just at the spot where the figure is sitting on the heap of débris ; and that when it was there, part of it came down by the channel on the left, its bed being still marked by the delicately chiselled lines of fissure. He would tell you that the foreground had also once been the top of the fall, and that the vertical fissures on the right of it were evidently then the channel of a side stream. He would tell you that the fall was then much lower than it is now, and that being lower, it had less force, and cut itself a narrower bed ; and that the spot where it reached the higher precipice is marked by the expansion of the wide basin which its increased violence has excavated, and by the gradually increasing concavity of the rocks below, which we see have been hollowed into a complete vault by the elastic bound of the water. But neither he nor I could tell you with what exquisite and finished marking of every fragment and particle of soil or rock, both in its own structure and the evidence it bears of these great influences, the whole of this is confirmed and carried out.

With this inimitable drawing we may compare the rocks in the foreground of the Llanthony. These latter are not divided by joints, but into thin horizontal and united beds, which the

torrent in its times of flood has chiselled away,

leaving one exposed under another, with the sweeping marks of its eddies upon their edges. And

here we have an instance of an exception to a general rule, occasioned by particular and local action. We have seen that the action of water over any surface *universally*, whether falling, as in rain, or sweeping, as a torrent, induces convexity of form. But when we have rocks *in situ*, as here, exposed at their edges to the violent action of an eddy, that eddy will cut a vault or circular space for itself, (as we saw on a large

§ 24. Various parts whose history is told us by the details of the drawing.

§ 25. Beautiful instance of an exception to general rules in the Llanthony.

scale with the high waterfall,) and we have a concave curve interrupting the general contours of the rock. And thus Turner (while every edge of his masses is rounded, and, the moment we rise above the level of the water, all is convex) has interrupted the great contours of his strata with concave curves, precisely where the last waves of the torrent have swept against the exposed edges of the beds. Nothing could more strikingly prove the depth of that knowledge by which every touch of this consummate artist is regulated, that universal command of subject which never acts for a moment on anything conventional or habitual, but fills every corner and space with new evidence of knowledge, and fresh manifestation of thought.

The Lower Fall of the Tees, with the chain-bridge, might serve us for an illustration of all the properties and forms of vertical beds of rock, as the upper fall has of horizontal; but we pass rather to observe, in detached pieces of foreground, the particular modulation of parts which cannot be investigated in the grand combinations of general mass.

§ 26. Turner's drawing of detached blocks of weathered stone.

The blocks of stone which form the foreground of the Ulles water are, I believe, the finest example in the world of the finished drawing of rocks which have been subjected to violent aqueous action. Their surfaces seem to palpitate from the fine touch of the waves, and every part of them is rising or falling in soft swell or gentle depression, though the eye can scarcely trace the fine shadows on which this chiselling of the surface depends. And with all this, every block of them has individual character, dependent on the expression of the angular lines of which its contours were first formed, and which is retained and felt through all the modulation and melting of the water-worn surface. And what is done here in the most important part of the picture, to be especially attractive to the eye, is often done by Turner with lavish and overwhelming power, in the accumulated débris of a wide foreground, strewed with the ruin of ages, as, for instance, in the Junction of the Greta and Tees, where he has choked the torrent bed with a mass of shattered rock, thrown down with the profusion and carelessness of nature herself; and yet every separate block is a study, (and has evidently been drawn from nature, chiselled and varied in its parts, as if

it were to be the chief member of a separate subject ; yet without ever losing, in a single instance, its subordinate position, or occasioning, throughout the whole accumulated multitude, the repetition of a single line.

I consider cases like these, of perfect finish and new conception, applied and exerted in the drawing of every member of a confused and almost countlessly-divided system, about the most

§ 27. And of complicated foreground.

wonderful, as well as the most characteristic passages of Turner's foregrounds. It is done not less marvellously, though less distinctly, in the individual parts of all his broken ground, as in examples like these of separate blocks. The articulation of such a passage as the nearest bank, in the picture we have already spoken of at so great length, the Upper Fall of the Tees, might serve us for a day's study, if we were to go into it part by part ; but it is impossible to do this, except with the pencil ; we can only repeat the same general observations, about eternal change and unbroken unity, and tell you to observe how the eye is kept throughout on solid and retiring surfaces, instead of being thrown, as by Claude, on flat and equal edges. You cannot find a single edge in Turner's work ; you are everywhere kept upon round surfaces, and you go back on these you cannot tell how—never taking a leap, but progressing imperceptibly along the unbroken bank, till you find yourself a quarter of a mile into the picture, beside the figure at the bottom of the waterfall.

Finally, the bank of earth on the right of the grand drawing of Penmaen Mawr, may be taken as the standard of the representation of soft soil modelled by descending rain ; and may

§ 28. And of loose soil.

serve to show us how exquisite in character are the resultant lines, and how full of every species of attractive and even sublime quality, if we only are wise enough not to scorn the study of them. The higher the mind, it may be taken as a universal rule, the less it will scorn that which appears to be small or unimportant ; and the rank of a painter may always be determined by observing how he uses, and with what respect he views the minutiae of nature. Greatness of mind is not shown by admitting small things, but by making small things great under its influence. He who can take no interest in what is small, will take false interest in what is great ;

he who cannot make a bank sublime, will make a mountain ridiculous.

It is not until we have made ourselves acquainted with these simple facts of form, as they are illustrated by the slighter works of Turner, that we can become at all competent to enjoy the combination of all, in such works as the Mercury and Argus, or Bay of Baiaë, in which the mind is at first bewildered by the abundant outpouring of the master's knowledge. Often as I have paused before these noble works, I never felt on returning to them as if I had ever seen them before ; for their abundance is so deep and various that the mind, according to its own temper at the time of seeing, perceives some new series of truths rendered in them, just as it would on revisiting a natural scene ; and detects new relations and associations of these truths which set the whole picture in a different light at every return to it. And this effect is especially caused by the management of the foreground ; for the more marked objects of the picture may be taken one by one, and thus examined and known ; but the foregrounds of Turner are so united in all their parts that the eye cannot take them by divisions, but is guided from stone to stone, and bank to bank, discovering truths totally different in aspect, according to the direction in which it approaches them, and approaching them in a different direction, and viewing them as a part of a new system, every time that it begins its course at a new point.

§ 29. The union of all in the ideal foregrounds of the Academy pictures.

One lesson, however, we are invariably taught by all, however approached or viewed,—that the work of the Great Spirit of nature is as deep and unapproachable in the lowest as in the noblest objects,—that the Divine mind is as visible in its full energy of operation on every lowly bank and mouldering stone, as in the lifting of the pillars of heaven, and settling the foundation of the earth ; and that to the rightly perceiving mind, there is the same infinity, the same majesty, the same power, the same unity, and the same perfection, manifest in the casting of the clay as in the scattering of the cloud, in the mouldering of the dust as in the kindling of the day-star.

§ 30. And the great lesson to be received from all.

SECTION V. OF TRUTH OF WATER.

CHAPTER I.

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE ANCIENTS.

OF all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds ; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace ; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen ; then as it exists in the form of the torrent—in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river ; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea ; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty ? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling ? It is like trying to paint a soul.

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water—to lay on canvas as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant—is, perhaps, the easiest task of art ; and even ordinary running or falling water may be sufficiently rendered, by observing careful curves of projection with a dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgment and truth by Ruysdael. But to paint

§ 1. Sketch of the functions and infinite agency of water.

§ 2. The ease with which a common representation of it may be given. The impossibility of a faithful one.

the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself—to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea waves, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient—so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion—with its variety and delicacy of color, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below ;—to do this perfectly, is beyond the power of man ; to do it even partially, has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it.

As the general laws which govern the appearances of water have equal effect on all its forms, it would be injudicious to treat the subject in divisions : for the same forces which govern the waves and foam of the torrent, are equally influential on those of the sea ; and it will be more convenient to glance generally at the system of water-painting of each school and artist, than to devote separate chapters to the examination of the lake, river, or sea-painting of all. We shall, therefore, vary our usual plan, and look first at the water-painting of the ancients ; then at that of the moderns generally ; lastly, at that of Turner.

It is necessary in the outset to state briefly one or two of the optical conditions by which the appearance of the surface of water is affected : to describe them all would require a separate essay, even if I possessed the requisite knowledge, which I do not. The accidental modifications under which general laws come into play are innumerable, and often, in their extreme complexity, inexplicable, I suppose, even by men of the most extended optical knowledge. What I shall here state are a few only of the broadest laws verifiable by the reader's immediate observation, but of which nevertheless, I have found artists frequently ignorant ; owing to their habit of sketching from nature without thinking or reasoning, and especially of finishing at home. It is not often, I believe, that an artist draws the reflections in water as he sees them ; over large spaces, and in weather that is not very calm, it is nearly impossible to do so ; when it is possible, some-

§ 3. Difficulty of properly dividing the subject.

§ 4. Inaccuracy of study of water-effect among all painters.

times in haste, and sometimes in idleness, and sometimes under the idea of improving nature, they are slurred or misrepresented ; it is so easy to give something like a suggestive resemblance of calm water, that, even when the landscape is finished from nature, the water is merely indicated as something that may be done at any time, and then, in the home work, come the cold leaden grays with some, and the violent blues and greens with others, and the horizontal lines with the feeble, and the bright touches and sparkles with the dexterous, and everything that is shallow and commonplace with all. Now, the fact is, that there is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be ; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues, of variable, pleasant light out of the sky ; nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain bars, in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base ; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark, serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream, either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky—so it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise. Now, this farseeing is just the difference between the great and the vulgar painter ; the common man *knows* the roadside pool is muddy, and draws its mud ; the great painter sees beneath and behind the brown surface what will take him a day's work to follow, but he follows it, cost what it will. And if painters would only go out to the nearest common and take the nearest dirty pond among the furze, and draw that thoroughly, not considering that it is water that they are drawing, and that water must be done in a certain way ; but drawing determinedly what they *see*, that is to say, all the trees, and their shaking leaves, and all the hazy passages of disturbing sunshine ; and the bottom seen in the clearer little bits at the edge, and the stones of it, and all the sky, and the clouds far down in the middle, drawn as completely, and more delicately they must be, than the real clouds above, they would come home with such a notion of water-painting as might save me and every one else all trouble of writing more about the matter ; but now they do nothing of

the kind, but take the ugly, round, yellow surface for granted, or else improve it. and, instead of giving that refined, complex, delicate, but saddened and gloomy reflection in the polluted water, they clear it up with coarse flashes of yellow, and green, and blue, and spoil their own eyes, and hurt ours; failing, of course, still more hopelessly in touching the pure, inimitable light of waves thrown loose; and so Canaletto is still thought to have painted canals, and Vandewelde and Backhuysen to have painted sea, and the uninterpreted streams and maligned sea hiss shame upon us from all their rocky beds and hollow shores.

I approach this part of my subject with more despondency than any other, and that for several reasons; first, the water painting of all the elder landscape painters, excepting a few of

§ 5. Difficulty of treating this part of the subject. the better passages of Claude and Ruysdael, is so execrable, so beyond all expression and explanation

bad; and Claude's and Ruysdael's best so cold and valueless, that I do not know how to address those who like such painting; I do not know what their sensations are respecting sea. I can perceive nothing in Vandewelde or Backhuysen of the lowest redeeming merit; no power, no presence of intellect—or evidence of perception—of any sort or kind; no resemblance—even the feeblest—of anything natural; no invention—even the most sluggish—of anything agreeable. Had they given us staring green seas with hatchet edges, such as we see Her Majesty's ships so-and-so fixed into by the heads or sterns in the first room of the Royal Academy, the admiration of them would have been comprehensible; there being a natural predilection in the mind of men for green waves with curling tops, but not for clay and wool; so that though I can understand, in some sort, why people admire everything else in old art, why they admire Salvator's rocks, and Claude's foregrounds, and Hobbima's trees, and Paul Potter's cattle, and Jan Steen's pans; and while I can perceive in all these likings a root which seems right and legitimate, and to be appealed to; yet when I find they can even *endure* the *sight* of a Backhuysen on their room walls (I speak seriously) it makes me hopeless at once. I may be wrong, or they may be wrong, but at least I can conceive of no principle or opinion common between us, which either can address or understand in the other; and yet I am wrong in this want of con-

ception, for I know that Turner once liked Vandewelde, and I can trace the evil influence of Vandewelde on most of his early sea painting, but Turner certainly could not have liked Vandewelde without *some* legitimate cause. Another discouraging point is that I cannot catch a wave, nor Daguerreotype it, and so there is no coming to pure demonstration; but the forms and hues of water must always be in some measure a matter of dispute and feeling, and the more so because there is no perfect or even tolerably perfect sea painting to refer to: the sea never has been, and I fancy never will be nor can be painted; it is only suggested by means of more or less spiritual and intelligent conventionalism; and though Turner has done enough to suggest the sea mightily and gloriously, after all it is by conventionalism still, and there remains so much that is unlike nature, that it is always possible for those who do not feel his power to justify their dislike, on very sufficient and reasonable grounds; and to maintain themselves obstinately unrecapitulant of the good, by insisting on the deficiency which no mortal hand can supply, and which commonly is most manifest on the one hand, where most has been achieved on the other.

With calm water the case is different. Facts are ascertainable and demonstrable there, and by the notice of one or two of the simplest, we may obtain some notion of the little success and intelligence of the elder painters in this easier field, and so prove their probable failure in contending with greater difficulties.

First: Water, of course, owing to its transparency, possesses not a perfectly reflective surface, like that of speculum metal, but a surface whose reflective power is dependent on the angle at which the rays to be reflected fall. The smaller

§ 6. General laws which regulate the phenomena of water. First, the imperfection of its reflective surface.

this angle, the greater are the number of rays reflected. Now, according to the number of rays reflected is the force of the image of objects above, and according to the number of rays transmitted is the perceptibility of objects below the water. Hence the visible transparency and reflective power of water are in inverse ratio. In looking down into it from above, we receive transmitted rays which exhibit either the bottom, or the objects floating in the water; or else if the water be deep and clear, we

receive very few rays, and the water looks black. In looking along water we receive reflected rays, and therefore the image of objects above it. Hence, in shallow water on a level shore the bottom is seen at our feet, clearly ; it becomes more and more obscure as it retires, even though the water do not increase in depth, and at a distance of twelve or twenty yards—more or less according to our height above the water—becomes entirely invisible, lost in the lustre of the reflected surface.

Second : The brighter the objects reflected, the larger the angle at which reflection is visible ; it is always to be remembered that, strictly speaking, only light objects are reflected, and that the darker ones are seen only in proportion to the number of rays of light that they can send ; so that a dark object comparatively loses its power to affect the surface of water, and the water in the space of a dark reflection is seen partially with the image of the object, and partially transparent. It will be found on observation that under a bank—suppose with dark trees above showing spaces of bright sky, the bright sky is reflected distinctly, and the bottom of the water is in those spaces not seen ; but in the dark spaces of reflection we see the bottom of the water, and the color of that bottom and of the water itself mingles with and modifies that of the color of the trees casting the dark reflection.

This is one of the most beautiful circumstances connected with water surface, for by these means a variety of color and a grace and evanescence are introduced in the reflection otherwise impossible. Of course at great distances even the darkest objects cast distinct images, and the hue of the water cannot be seen, but in near water the occurrence of its own color modifying the dark reflections, while it leaves light ones unaffected, is of infinite value.

Take, by way of example, an extract from my own diary at Venice.

“ May 17th, 4 P.M. Looking east the water is calm, and reflects the sky and vessels, with this peculiarity ; the sky, which is pale blue, is in its reflection of the same kind of blue, only a little deeper ; but the *vessels' hulls, which are black, are reflected in pale sea green, i.e.,* the natural color of the water under sunlight ; while the *orange masts* of the vessels, wet with a recent

§ 7. The inherent hue of water modifies dark reflections, and does not affect bright ones.

shower, are reflected *without change of color*, only not quite so bright as above. One ship has a white, another a red stripe," (I ought to have said horizontal along the gunwales,) '*of these the water takes no notice.*'

"What is curious, a boat passes across with white and dark figures, the water reflects the dark ones in green, and misses out all the white; this is chiefly owing to the dark images being opposed to the bright reflected sky."

I have left the passage about the white and red stripe, because it will be useful to us presently; all that I wish to insist upon here is the showing of the local color (pea green) of the water in the spaces which were occupied by dark reflections, and the unaltered color of the bright ones.

Third: Clear water takes no shadow, and that for two reasons; A perfect surface of speculum metal takes no shadow, (this the reader may instantly demonstrate for himself,) and a

§ 8. Water takes perfectly transparent body as air takes no shadow; no shadow. hence water, whether transparent or reflective, takes no shadow.

But shadows, or the forms of them, appear on water frequently and sharply: it is necessary carefully to explain the causes of these, as they are one of the most eminent sources of error in water painting.

First: Water in shade is much more reflective than water in sunlight. Under sunlight the local color of the water is commonly vigorous and active, and forcibly affects, as we have seen, all the dark reflections, commonly diminishing their depth. Under shade, the reflective power is in a high degree increased,* and it will be found most frequently that the forms of shadows are expressed on the surface of water, not by actual shade, but by more genuine reflection of objects above. This is another most important and valuable circumstance, and we owe to it some phenomena of the highest beauty.

A very muddy river, as the Arno for instance at Florence, is seen during sunshine of its own yellow color, rendering all reflections discolored and feeble. At twilight it recovers its

* I state this merely as a fact: I am unable satisfactorily to account for it on optical principles, and were it otherwise, the investigation would be of little interest to the general reader, and little value to the artist.

reflective power to the fullest extent, and the mountains of Carrara are seen reflected in it as clearly as if it were a crystalline lake. The Mediterranean, whose determined blue yields to hardly any modifying color in daytime, receives at evening the image of its rocky shores. On our own seas, seeming shadows are seen constantly cast in purple and blue, upon pale green. These are no shadows, but the pure reflection of dark or blue sky above, seen in the shadowed space, refused by the local color of the sea in the sunlighted spaces, and turned more or less purple by the opposition of the vivid green.

We have seen, however, above, that the local color of water, while it comparatively refuses dark reflections, accepts bright ones without deadening them. Hence when a shadow is thrown across a space of water of strong local color, receiving, alternately, light and dark reflections, it has no power of increasing the reflectiveness of the water in the bright spaces, still less of diminishing it; hence, on all the dark reflections it is seen more or less distinctly, on all the light ones it vanishes altogether.

Let us take an instance of the exquisite complexity of effect induced by these various circumstances in co-operation.

Suppose a space of clear water showing the bottom under a group of trees, showing sky through their branches, casting shadows on the surface of the water, which we will suppose also to possess some color of its own. Close to us, we shall see the bottom, with the shadows of the trees clearly thrown upon it, and the color of the water seen in its genuineness by transmitted light. Farther off, the bottom will be gradually lost sight of, but it will be seen in the dark reflections much farther than in the light ones. At last it ceases to affect even the former, and the pure surface effect takes place. The blue bright sky is reflected truly, but the dark trees are reflected imperfectly, and the color of the water is seen instead. Where the shadow falls on these dark reflections a darkness is seen plainly, which is found to be composed of the pure clear reflection of the dark trees; when it crosses the reflection of the sky, the shadow of course, being thus fictitious, vanishes.

Farther, of course on whatever dust and other foulness may be present in water, real shadow falls clear and dark in propor-

§ 9. Modification
of dark reflections
by shadow.

tion to the quantity of solid substance present. On very muddy rivers, real shadow falls in sunlight nearly as sharply as on land; on our own sea, the apparent shadow caused by increased reflection, is much increased in depth by the chalkiness and impurity of the water.

Farther, when surface is rippled, every ripple, up to a certain variable distance on each side of the spectator, and at a certain angle between him and the sun, varying with the size and shape of the ripples, reflects to him a small image of the sun. Hence those dazzling fields of expanding light so often seen upon the sea.

Any object that comes between the sun and these ripples, takes from them the power of reflecting the sun, and in consequence, all their light; hence any intervening objects cast apparent shadows upon such spaces of intense force, and of the exact shape, and in the exact place of real shadows, and yet which are no more real shadows than the withdrawal of an image of a piece of white paper from a mirror is a shadow on the mirror. Farther, in all shallow water, more or less in proportion to its shallowness, but in some measure, I suppose, up to depths of forty or fifty fathoms, and perhaps more, the local color of the water depends in great measure on light reflected from the bottom. This, however, is especially manifest in clear rivers like the Rhone, where the absence of the light reflected from below forms an apparent shadow, often visibly detached some distance from the floating object which casts it.

The following extract from my own diary at
§ 10. Examples on the water of the Rhone. Geneva, with the subsequent one, which is a continuation of that already given in part at Venice, will illustrate both this and the other points we have been stating.

“GENEVA, 21st April, Morning.

“The sunlight falls from the cypresses of Rousseau’s island straight towards the bridge. The shadows of the bridge and of the trees fall on the water in leaden purple, opposed to its general hue of aquamarine green. This green color is caused by the light being reflected from the bottom, though the bottom is not seen; as is evident by its becoming paler towards the middle of

the river, where the water shoals, on which pale part the purple shadow of the small bridge falls most forcibly, which shadow, however, is still only apparent, being the absence of this reflected light, associated with the increased reflective power of the water, which in those spaces reflects blue sky above. A boat swings in the shoal water ; its reflection is cast in a transparent pea-green, which is considerably darker than the pale aquamarine of the surface at the spot. Its shadow is detached from it just about half the depth of the reflection ; which, therefore, forms a bright green light between the keel of the boat and its shadow ; where the shadow cuts the reflection, the reflection is darkest and something like the true color of the boat ; where the shadow falls out of the reflection, it is of a leaden purple, pale. The boat is at an angle of about 20° below. Another boat nearer, in deeper water, shows no shadow, whatsoever, and the reflection is marked by its transparent green, while the surrounding water takes a lightish blue reflection from the sky."

The above notes, after what has been said, require no comment ; but one more case must be stated belonging to rough water. Every large wave of the sea is in ordinary circumstances divided into, or rather covered by, innumerable smaller waves, each of which, in all probability, from some of its edges or surfaces reflects the sunbeams ; and hence result a glitter, polish, and vigorous light over the whole flank of the wave, which are, of course, instantly withdrawn within the space of a cast shadow, whose form, therefore, though it does not affect the great body or ground of the water in the least, is sufficiently traceable by the withdrawal of the high lights ; also every string and wreath of foam above or within the wave takes real shadow, and thus adds to the impression.

I have not stated one-half of the circumstances which produce or influence effects of shadow on water ; but lest I should confuse or weary the reader, I leave him to pursue the subject for himself ; enough having been stated to establish this general principle, that whenever shadow is seen on clear water, and, in a measure, even on foul water, it is not, as on land, a dark shade subduing where it falls the sunny general hue to a lower tone ; but it is a space of an entirely different color, subject itself, by its susceptibility of reflection, to infinite varieties of depth and

hue, and liable, under certain circumstances, to disappear altogether; and that, therefore, whenever we have to paint such shadows, it is not only the hue of the water itself that we have to consider, but all the circumstances by which in the position attributed to them such shaded spaces could be affected.

Fourth: If water be rippled, the side of every ripple next to us reflects a piece of the sky, and the side of every ripple farthest from us reflects a piece of the opposite shore, or of whatever objects may be beyond the ripple. But as we soon lose sight of the farther sides of the ripples on the retiring surface, the whole rippled space will then be reflective of the sky only. Thus, where calm distant water receives reflections of high shores, every extent of rippled surface appears as a bright line interrupting that reflection with the color of the sky.

Fifth: When a ripple or swell is seen at such an angle as to afford a view of its farther side, it carries the reflection of objects farther down than calm water would. Therefore all motion in water elongates reflections, and throws them into confused vertical lines. The real amount of this elongation is not distinctly visible, except in the case of very bright objects, and especially of lights, as of the sun, moon, or lamps by a river shore, whose reflections are hardly ever seen as circles or points, which of course they are on perfectly calm water, but as long streams of tremulous light.

But it is strange that while we are constantly in the habit of seeing the reflection of the sun, which ought to be a mere circle, elongated into a stream of light extending from the horizon to the shore, the elongation of the reflection of a sail or other object to one-half of this extent is received, if represented in a picture, with incredulity by the greater number of spectators. In one of Turner's Venices the image of the white lateen-sails of the principal boat is about twice as long as the sails themselves. I have heard the truth of this simple effect disputed over and over again by intelligent persons, and yet on any water so exposed as the lagoons of Venice, the periods are few and short when there is so little motion as that the reflection of sails a mile off shall not affect the swell within six feet of the spectator.

There is, however, a strange arbitrariness about this elonga-

§ 11. Effect of ripple on distant water.

§ 12. Elongation of reflections by moving water.

tion of reflection, which prevents it from being truly felt. If we see on an extent of lightly swelling water surface the image of a bank of white clouds, with masses of higher accumulation at intervals, the water will not usually reflect the whole bank in an elongated form, but it will commonly take the eminent parts, and reflect them in long straight columns of defined breadth, and miss the intermediate lower parts altogether; and even in doing this it will be capricious, for it will take one eminence, and miss another, with no apparent reason; and often when the sky is covered with white clouds, some of those clouds will cast long tower-like reflections, and others none, so arbitrarily that the spectator is often puzzled to find out which are the accepted and which the refused.

In many cases of this kind it will be found rather that the eye is, from want of use and care, insensible to the reflection than that the reflection is not there; and a little thought and careful observation will show us that what we commonly suppose to be a surface of uniform color is, indeed, affected more or less by an infinite variety of hues, prolonged, like the sun image, from a great distance, and that our apprehension of its lustre, purity, and even of its surface, is in no small degree dependent on our feeling of these multitudinous hues, which the continual motion of that surface prevents us from analyzing or understanding for what they are.

Sixth: Rippled water, of which we can see the farther side of the waves, will reflect a perpendicular line clearly, a bit of its length being given on the side of each wave, and easily joined by the eye. But if the line slope, its reflection will be excessively confused and disjointed; and if horizontal, nearly invisible. It was this circumstance which prevented the red and white stripe of the ships at Venice, noticed above, from being visible.

Seventh: Every reflection is the image in reverse of just so much of the objects beside the water, as we could see if we were placed as much under the level of the water as we are actually above it. If an object be so far back from the bank, that if we were five feet under the water level we could not see it over the bank, then, standing five feet above the water, we shall not be able to see its im-

§ 13. Effect of rippled water on horizontal and inclined images.

§ 14. To what extent reflection is visible from above.

age under the reflected bank. Hence the reflection of all objects that have any slope back from the water is shortened, and at last disappears as we rise above it. Lakes seen from a great height appear like plates of metal set in the landscape, reflecting the sky but none of their shores.

Eighth : Any given point of the object above the water is reflected, if reflected at all, at some spot in a vertical line beneath it, so long as the plane of the water is horizontal. On rippled water a slight deflection sometimes takes place, and the image of a vertical tower will slope a little away from the wind, owing to the casting of the image on the sloping sides of the ripples. On the sloping sides of large waves the deflection is in proportion to the slope. For rough practice, after the slope of the wave is determined, let the artist turn his paper until it becomes horizontal, and then paint the reflections of any object upon it as on level water, and he will be right.

§ 15. Deflection of images on agitated water.

Such are the most common and general optical laws which are to be taken into consideration in the painting of water. Yet, in the application of them, as tests of good or bad water painting, we must be cautious in the extreme. An artist may know all these laws, and comply with them,

§ 16. Necessity of watchfulness as well as of science.

Licenses, how taken by great men.

and yet paint water execrably ; and he may be ignorant of every one of them, and, in their turn, and in certain places, violate every one of them, and yet paint water gloriously. Thousands of exquisite effects take place in nature, utterly inexplicable, and which can be believed only while they are seen ; the combinations and applications of the above laws are so varied and complicated that no knowledge or labor could, if applied analytically, keep pace with them. Constant and eager watchfulness, and portfolios filled with actual statements of water-effect, drawn on the spot and on the instant, are worth more to the painter than the most extended optical knowledge ; without these all his knowledge will end in a pedantic falsehood. With these it does not matter how gross or how daring here and there may be his violations of this or that law ; his very transgressions will be admirable.

It may be said, that this is a dangerous principle to advance in these days of idleness. I cannot help it ; it is true, and must

be affirmed. Of all contemptible criticism, the most to be condemned is that which punishes great works of art when they fight without armor, and refuses to feel or acknowledge the great spiritual refracted sun of their truth, because it has risen at a false angle, and burst upon them before its appointed time. And yet, on the other hand, let it be observed that it is not feeling, nor fancy, nor imagination, so called, that I have put before science, but watchfulness, experience, affection and trust in nature ; and farther let it be observed, that there is a difference between the license taken by one man and another, which makes one license admirable, and the other punishable ; and that this difference is of a kind sufficiently discernible by every earnest person, though it is not so explicable as that we can beforehand say where and when, or even to whom, the license is to be forgiven. In the *Paradise* of Tintoret, in the *Academy of Venice*, the Angel is seen in the distance driving Adam and Eve out of the garden. Not, for Tintoret, the leading to the gate with consolation or counsel ; his strange ardor of conception is seen here as everywhere. Full speed they fly, the angel and the human creatures ; the angel wrapt in an orb of light floats on, stooped forward in his fierce flight, and does not touch the ground ; the chastised creatures rush before him in abandoned terror. All this might have been invented by another, though in other hands it would assuredly have been offensive ; but one circumstance which completes the story could have been thought of or dared by none but Tintoret. The Angel casts a SHADOW before him towards Adam and Eve.

Now that a globe of light should cast a shadow is a license, as far as mere optical matters are concerned, of the most audacious kind. But how beautiful is the circumstance in its application here, showing that the angel, who is light to all else around him, is darkness to those whom he is commissioned to banish forever.

I have before noticed the license of Rubens in making his horizon an oblique line. His object is to carry the eye to a given point in the distance. The road winds to it, the clouds fly at it, the trees nod to it, a flock of sheep scamper towards it, a carter points his whip at it, his horses pull for it, the figures push for it, and the horizon slopes to it. If the horizon had

been horizontal, it would have embarrassed everything and everybody.

In Turner's *Pas de Calais* there is a buoy poised on the ridge of a near wave. It casts its reflection vertically down the flank of the wave, which slopes steeply. I cannot tell whether this is a license or a mistake ; I suspect the latter, for the same thing occurs not unfrequently in Turner's seas ; but I am almost certain that it would have been done wilfully in this case, even had the mistake been pointed out, for the vertical line is necessary to the picture, and the eye is so little accustomed to catch the real bearing of the reflections on the slopes of waves that it does not feel the fault.

In one of the smaller rooms of the Uffizii at Florence, off the Tribune, there are two so-called Claudes ; one a pretty wooded landscape, I think a copy, the other a marine with architecture,

very sweet and genuine. The sun is setting at the side of the picture, it casts a long stream of light upon the water. This stream of light is oblique, and comes from the horizon, where it is under the sun, to a point near the centre of the picture. If this had been done as a license, it would be an instance of most absurd and unjustifiable license, as the fault is detected by the eye in a moment, and there is no occasion nor excuse for it. But I imagine it to be an instance rather of the harm of imperfect science. Taking his impression instinctively from nature, Claude usually did what is right and put his reflection vertically under the sun ; probably, however, he had read in some treatise on optics that every point in this reflection was in a vertical plane between the sun and spectator ; or he might have noticed walking on the shore that the reflection came straight from the sun to his feet, and intending to indicate the position of the spectator, drew in his next picture the reflection sloping to the supposed point, the error being excusable enough, and plausible enough to have been lately revived and systematized.*

§ 17. Various licenses or errors in water painting of Claude, Cuyp, Vandewelde.

* Parsey's "Convergence of Perpendiculars." I have not space here to enter into any lengthy exposure of this mistake, but reasoning is fortunately unnecessary, the appeal to experiment being easy. Every picture is the representation, as before stated, of a vertical plate of glass, with what might be seen through it, drawn on its surface. Let a vertical plate of

In the picture of Cuyp, No. 83 in the Dulwich Gallery, the post at the end of the bank casts three or four radiating reflections. This is visibly neither license nor half science, but pure ignorance. Again, in the picture attributed to Paul Potter, No. 176, Dulwich Gallery, I believe most people must feel, the moment they look at it, that there is something wrong with the water, that it looks odd, and hard, and like ice or lead; and though they may not be able to tell the reason of the impression—for when they go near they will find it smooth and lustrous, and prettily painted—yet they will not be able to shake off the unpleasant sense of its being like a plate of bad mirror set in a model landscape among moss, rather than like a pond. The reason is, that while this water receives clear reflections from the fence and hedge on the left, and is everywhere smooth and evidently capable of giving true images, it yet reflects none of the cows.

In the Vanderveelde (113) there is not a line of ripple or swell in any part of the sea; it is absolutely windless, and the near boat casts its image with great fidelity, which being unprolonged downwards informs us that the calm is perfect, (Rule V.,) and being unshortened informs us that we are on a level with the water, or nearly so. (Rule VII.) Yet underneath the vessel on the right, the gray shade which stands for reflection breaks off immediately, descending like smoke a little way below the hull, then leaving the masts and sails entirely unrecorded. This I imagine to be not ignorance, but unjustifiable license. Vanderveelde evidently desired to give an impression of great extent of surface, and thought that if he gave the reflection more faithfully, as the tops of the masts would come down to the nearest part of the surface, they would destroy the evidence of distance, and appear to set the ship above the boat instead of beyond it.

glass be taken, and wherever it be placed, whether the sun be at its side or at its centre, the reflection will always be found in a vertical line under the sun, parallel with the side of the glass. The pane of any window looking to sea is all the apparatus necessary for this experiment, and yet it is not long since this very principle was disputed with me by a man of much taste and information, who supposed Turner to be wrong in drawing the reflection straight down at the side of his picture, as in his Lancaster Sands, and innumerable other instances.

I doubt not in such awkward hands that such would indeed have been the case, but he is not on that account to be excused for painting his surface with gray horizontal lines, as is done by nautically-disposed children : for no destruction of distance in the ocean is so serious a loss as that of its liquidity. It is better to feel a want of extent in the sea, than an extent which we might walk upon or play at billiards upon.

Among all the pictures of Canaletto, which I have ever seen, and they are not a few, I remember but one or two where there is any variation from one method of treatment of the water.

§ 18. And Cana- He almost always covers the whole space of it with
 letto. one monotonous ripple, composed of a coat of well-chosen, but perfectly opaque and smooth sea-green, covered with a certain number, I cannot state the exact average, but it varies from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and upwards, according to the extent of canvas to be covered, of white concave touches, which are very properly symbolical of ripple.

And, as the canal retires back from the eye, he very geometrically diminishes the size of his ripples, until he arrives at an even field of apparently smooth water. By our sixth rule, this rippling water as it retires should show more and more of the reflection of the sky above it, and less and less of that of objects beyond it, until, at two or three hundred yards down the canal, the whole field of water should be one even gray or blue, the color of the sky receiving no reflections whatever of other objects. What does Canaletto do? Exactly in proportion as he retires, he displays *more and more* of the reflection of objects, and less and less of the sky, until, three hundred yards away, all the houses are reflected as clear and sharp as in a quiet lake.

This, again, is wilful and inexcusable violation of truth, of which the reason, as in the last case, is the painter's consciousness of weakness. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to express the light reflection of the blue sky on a distant ripple, and to make the eye understand the cause of the color, and the motion of the apparently smooth water, especially where there are buildings above to be reflected, for the eye never understands the want of the reflection. But it is the easiest and most agreeable thing in the world to give the inverted image : it occupies a vast space of otherwise troublesome distance in the

simplest way possible, and is understood by the eye at once. Hence Canaletto is glad, as any other inferior workman would be, not to say obliged, to give the reflections in the distance. But when he comes up close to the spectator, he finds the smooth surface just as troublesome near, as the ripple would have been far off. It is a very nervous thing for an ignorant artist to have a great space of vacant smooth water to deal with, close to him, too far down to take reflections from buildings, and yet which must be made to look flat and retiring and transparent. Canaletto, with his sea-green, did not at all feel himself equal to anything of this kind, and had therefore no resource but in the white touches above described, which occupy the alarming space without any troublesome necessity for knowledge or invention, and supply by their gradual diminution some means of expressing retirement of surface. It is easily understood, therefore, why he should adopt this system, which is just what any awkward workman would naturally cling to, trusting to the inaccuracy of observation of the public to secure him from detection.

Now in all these cases it is not the mistake or the license itself, it is not the infringement of this or that law which condemns the picture, but it is the spirit and habit of mind in which the license is taken, the cowardice or bluntness of feeling, which infects every part alike, and deprives the whole picture of vitality. Canaletto, had he been a great painter, might have cast his reflections wherever he chose, and rippled the water wherever he chose, and painted his sea sloping if he chose, and neither I nor any one else should have dared to say a word against him ; but he is a little and a bad painter, and so continues everywhere multiplying and magnifying mistakes, and adding apathy to error, until nothing can any more be pardoned in him. If it be but remembered that every one of the surfaces of those multitudinous ripples is in nature a mirror which catches, according to its position, either the image of the sky or of the silver beaks of the gondolas, or of their black bodies and scarlet draperies, or of the white marble, or the green sea-weed on the low stones, it cannot but be felt that those waves would have something more of color upon them than that opaque dead green. Green they are by their own na-

§ 19. Why unpardonable.

ture, but it is a transparent and emerald hue, mixing itself with the thousand reflected tints without overpowering the weakest of them ; and thus, in every one of those individual waves, the truths of color are contradicted by Canaletto by the thousand.

Venice is sad and silent now, to what she was in his time ; the canals are choked gradually one by one, and the foul water laps more and more sluggishly against the rent foundations ; but even yet, could I but place the reader at the early morning on the quay below the Rialto, when the market boats, full laden, float into groups of golden color, and let him watch the dashing of the water about their glittering steely heads, and under the shadows of the vine leaves, and show him the purple of the grapes and the figs, and the glowing of the scarlet gourds carried away in long streams upon the waves, and among them, the crimson fish baskets, splashing and sparkling, and flaming as the morning sun falls on their wet tawny sides, and above, the painted sails of the fishing boats, orange and white, scarlet and blue, and better than all such florid color, the naked, bronzed, burning limbs of the seamen, the last of the old Venetian race, who yet keep the right Giorgione color on their brows and bosoms, in strange contrast with the sallow sensual degradation of the creatures that live in the cafés of the Piazza, he would not be merciful to Canaletto any more.

Yet even Canaletto, in relation to the truths he had to paint, is spiritual, faithful, powerful, compared to the Dutch painters of sea. It is easily understood why his green paint and concave touches should be thought expressive of the water on which the real colors are not to be discerned but by attention, which is never given ; but it is not so easily understood, considering how many there are who love the sea, and look at it, that Vanderveelde and such others should be tolerated. As I before said, I feel utterly hopeless in addressing the admirers of these men, because I do not know what it is in their works which is supposed to be like nature. Foam appears to me to curdle and cream on the wave sides and to fly, flashing from their crests, and not to be set astride upon them like a peruke ; and waves appear to me to fall, and plunge, and toss, and nod, and crash over, and not to curl up like shavings ; and water appears to me, when it is gray, to have the gray of stormy air

§ 20. The Dutch
painters of sea.

mixed with its own deep, heavy, thunderous, threatening blue, and not the gray of the first coat of cheap paint on a deal door ; and many other such things appear to me which, as far as I can conjecture by what is admired of marine painting, appear to no one else ; yet I shall have something more to say about these men presently, with respect to the effect they have had upon Turner ; and something more, I hope, hereafter, with the help of illustration.

There is a sea-piece of Ruysdael's in the Louvre* which, though nothing very remarkable in any quality of art, is at least forceful, agreeable, and, as far as it goes, natural ; the waves have much freedom of action, and power of color ; the wind blows hard over the shore, and the whole picture may be studied with profit as a proof that the deficiency of color and everything else in Backhuysen's works, is no fault of the Dutch sea. There is sublimity and power in every field of nature from the pole to the line ; and though the painters of one country are often better and greater, universally, than those of another, this is less because the subjects of art are wanting anywhere, than because one country or one age breeds mighty and thinking men, and another none.

Ruysdael's painting of falling water and brook scenery is also generally agreeable—more than agreeable it can hardly be considered. There appears no exertion of mind in any of his works : nor are they calculated to produce either harm or good by their feeble influence. They are good furniture pictures, unworthy of praise, and undeserving of blame.

* In the last edition of this work was the following passage :—" I wish Ruysdael had painted one or two rough seas. I believe if he had he might have saved the unhappy public from much grievous victimizing, both in mind and pocket, for he would have shown that Vandevelde and Backhuysen were not quite sea-deities." The writer has to thank the editor of Murray's Handbook of Painting in Italy for pointing out the oversight. He had passed many days in the Louvre before the above passage was written, but had not been in the habit of pausing long anywhere except in the last two rooms, containing the pictures of the Italian school. The conjecture, however, shows that he had not ill-estimated the power of Ruysdael ; nor does he consider it as in anywise unfitting him for the task he has undertaken, that for every hour passed in galleries he has passed days on the sea-shore.

§ 21. Ruysdael, Claude, and Salvator.

The seas of Claude are the finest pieces of water-painting in ancient art. I do not say that I like them, because they appear to me selections of the particular moment when the sea is most insipid and characterless ; but I think that they are exceedingly true to the forms and time selected, or at least that the fine instances of them are so, of which there are exceedingly few.

On the right hand of one of the marines of Salvator, in the Pitti palace, there is a passage of sea reflecting the sunrise, which is thoroughly good, and very like Turner ; the rest of the picture, as the one opposite to it, utterly virtueless. I have not seen any other instance of Salvator's painting water with any care, it is usually as conventional as the rest of his work, yet conventionalism is perhaps more tolerable in water-painting than elsewhere ; and if his trees and rocks had been good, the rivers might have been generally accepted without objection.

The merits of Poussin as a sea or water painter may, I think, be sufficiently determined by the Deluge in the Louvre, where
 § 22. Nicholas the breaking up of the fountains of the deep is
 Poussin. typified by the capsizing of a wherry over a weir.

In the outer porch of St. Mark's at Venice, among the mosaics on the roof, there is a representation of the deluge. The ground is dark blue ; the rain is represented in bright white undulating parallel stripes ; between these stripes is seen the massy outline of the ark, a bit between each stripe, very dark and hardly distinguishable from the sky ; but it has a square window with a bright golden border, which glitters out conspicuously, and leads the eye to the rest—the sea below is almost concealed with dead bodies.

On the font of the church of San Frediano at Lucca, there is a representation of—possibly—the Israelites and Egyptians in the Red Sea. The sea is typified by undulating bands of stone, each band composed of three plies (almost the same type is to be seen in the glass-painting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as especially at Chartres). These bands would perhaps be hardly felt as very aqueous, but for the fish which are interwoven with them in a complicated manner, their heads appearing at one side of every band, and their tails at the other. .

Both of these representatives of deluge, archaic and rude as they are, I consider better, more suggestive, more inventive, and

more natural, than Poussin's. Indeed, this is not saying anything very depreciatory, as regards the St. Mark's one, for the glittering of the golden window through the rain is wonderfully well conceived, and almost deceptive, looking as if it had just caught a gleam of sunlight on its panes, and there is something very sublime in the gleam of this light above the floating corpses. But the other instance is sufficiently grotesque and imperfect, and yet, I speak with perfect seriousness, it is, I think, very far preferable to Poussin's.

On the other hand, there is a just medium between the meanness and apathy of such a conception as his, and the extravagance, still more contemptible, with which the subject has been treated in modern days.* I am not aware that I can refer to any instructive example of this intermediate course, for I fear the reader is by this time wearied of hearing of Turner, and the plate of Turner's picture of the deluge is so rare that it is of no use to refer to it.

It seems exceedingly strange that the great Venetian painters should have left us no instance, as far as I know, of any marine effects carefully studied. As already noted, whatever passages of sea occur in their backgrounds are merely broad extents of blue or green surface, fine in color, and coming dark usually against the horizon, well enough to be understood as sea. (yet even that not always without the help of a ship,) but utterly unregarded in all questions of completion and detail. The water even in Titian's landscape is almost always violently though grandly conventional, and seldom forms an important feature. Among the religious schools very sweet motives occur, but nothing which for a moment can be considered as real water-painting. Perugino's sea is usually very beautifully felt; his river in the fresco of S^{ta}. Maddalena at Florence is freely indicated, and looks level and clear; the reflections of the trees given with a rapid zigzag stroke of the brush. On the whole, I suppose that the best imitations of level water surface to be found in ancient art are in the clear Flemish

§ 23. Venetians
and Florentines.
Conclusion.

* I am here, of course, speaking of the treatment of the subject as a landscape only; many mighty examples of its conception occur where the sea, and all other adjuncts, are entirely subservient to the figures, as with Raffaele and M. Angelo.

landscapes. Cuypp's are usually very satisfactory, but even the best of these attain nothing more than the agreeable suggestion of calm pond or river. Of any tolerable representation of water in agitation, or under any circumstances that bring out its power and character, I know no instance ; and the more capable of noble treatment the subject happens to be, the more manifest invariably is the painter's want of feeling in every effort, and of knowledge in every line.

CHAPTER II.

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE MODERNS.

THERE are few men among modern landscape painters, who cannot paint quiet water at least suggestively, if not faithfully. Those who are incapable of doing this, would scarcely be considered artists at all; and anything like the ripples of Canaletto, or the black shadows of Vandewelde, would be looked upon as most unpromising, even in the work of a novice. Among those who most fully appreciate and render the qualities of space and surface in calm water, perhaps Copley Fielding stands first. His expanses of windless lake are among the most perfect passages of his works; for he can give surface as well as depth, and make his lake look not only clear, but, which is far more difficult, lustrous. He is less dependent than most of our artists upon reflections; and can give substance, transparency, and extent, where another painter would be reduced to paper; and he is exquisitely refined in his expression of distant breadth, by the delicate line of ripple interrupting the reflection, and by aerial qualities of color. Nothing, indeed, can be purer or more refined than his general feeling of lake sentiment, were it not for a want of simplicity—a fondness for pretty, rather than impressive color, and a consequent want of some of the higher expression of repose.

Hundreds of men might be named, whose works are highly instructive in the management of calm water. De Wint is singularly powerful and certain, exquisitely bright and vigorous in color. The late John Varley produced some noble passages. I have seen, some seven years ago, works by J. Holland, which were, I think, as near perfection as water-color can be carried—for *bona fide* truth, refined and finished to the highest degree. But the power of modern artists is not brought out until they have greater diffi-

§ 1. General power of the moderns in painting quiet water. The lakes of Fielding

§ 2. The calm rivers of De Wint, J. Holland, etc.

culties to struggle with. Stand for half an hour beside the fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side where the rapids

§ 3. The character of bright and violent falling water.

are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure; polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick—so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam; and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless, crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens which chase and checker them with purple and silver. I believe, when you have stood by this for half an hour, you will have discovered that there is something more in nature than has

§ 4. As given by Nesfield.

been given by Ruysdael. Probably you will not be much disposed to think of any mortal work at the time; but when you look back to what you have seen, and are inclined to compare it with art, you will remember—or ought to remember—Nesfield. He is a man of extraordinary feeling, both for the color and the spirituality of a great waterfall; exquisitely delicate in his management of the changeful veil of spray or mist; just in his curves and contours; and unequalled in color except by Turner. None of our water-color painters can approach him in the management of the variable hues of

clear water over weeded rocks ; but his feeling for it often leads him a little too far, and, like Copley Fielding, he loses sight of simplicity and dignity for the sake of delicacy or prettiness. His waterfalls are, however, unequalled in their way ; and, if he would remember, that in all such scenes there is much gloom as well as much splendor, and relieve the lustre of his attractive passages of color with more definite and prevalent grays, and give a little more substance to parts of his picture unaffected by spray, his work would be nearly perfect. His seas are also most instructive ; a little confused in chiaroscuro, but refined in form and admirable in color.

J. D. Harding is, I think, nearly unequalled in the *drawing* of running water. I do not know what Stanfield would do ; I have never seen an important piece of torrent drawn by him ; but

I believe even he could scarcely contend with the magnificent *abandon* of Harding's brush. There is

§ 5. The admirable water-drawing of J. D. Harding.

perhaps nothing which tells more in the drawing of water than decisive and swift execution ; for, in a rapid touch the hand naturally falls into the very curve of projection which is the absolute truth ; while in slow finish, all precision of curve and character is certain to be lost, except under the hand of an unusually powerful master. But Harding has both knowledge and velocity, and the fall of his torrents is beyond praise ; impatient, chafing, substantial, shattering, crystalline, and capricious ; full of various form, yet all apparently instantaneous and accidental, nothing conventional, nothing dependent upon parallel lines or radiating curves ; all broken up and dashed to pieces over the irregular rock, and yet all in unity of motion.

The color also of his *falling* and bright water is very perfect ; but in the dark and level parts of

§ 6. His color ; and painting of sea.

his torrents he has taken up a bad gray, which has hurt some of his best pictures. His gray in shadows under rocks or dark reflections is admirable ; but it is when the stream is in full light, and unaffected by reflections in distance, that he gets wrong. We believe that the fault is in a want of expression of darkness in the color, making it appear like a positive hue of the water, for which it is much too dead and cold.

Harding seldom paints sea, and it is well for Stanfield that he does not, or the latter would have to look to his crown. All

that we have seen from his hand is, as coast sea, quite faultless ; we only wish he would paint it more frequently ; always, however, with a veto upon French fishing-boats. In the Exhibition of 1842, he spoiled one of the most superb pieces of seashore and sunset which modern art has produced, with the pestilent square sail of one of these clumsy craft, which the eye could not escape from.

Before passing to our great sea painter, we must again refer to the works of Copley Fielding. It is with his sea as with his sky, he can only paint one, and that an easy one, but it is, for all that, an impressive and a true one. No man has ever given, with the same flashing freedom, the race of a running tide under a stiff breeze, nor caught, with the same grace and precision, the curvature of the breaking wave, arrested or accelerated by the wind. The forward fling of his foam, and the impatient run of his surges, whose quick, redoubling dash we can almost hear, as they break in their haste upon their own bosoms, are nature itself, and his sea gray or green was, nine years ago, very right, as color ; always a little wanting in transparency, but never cold or toneless. Since that time, he seems to have lost the sense of greenness in water, and has verged more and more on the purple and black, with unhappy results. His sea was always dependent for effect on its light or dark relief against the sky, even when it possessed color ; but it now has lost all local color and transparency together, and is little more than a study of chiaroscuro in an exceedingly ill-chosen gray. Besides, the perpetual repetition of the same idea is singularly weakening to the mind. Fielding, in all his life, can only be considered as having produced *one* sea picture. The others are duplicates. He ought to go to some sea of perfect clearness and brilliant color, as that on the coast of Cornwall, or of the Gulf of Genoa, and study it sternly in broad daylight, with no black clouds nor drifting rain to help him out of his difficulties. He would then both learn his strength and add to it.

But there is one point in all his seas deserving especial praise — a marked aim at *character*. He desires, especially in his latter works, not so much to produce an agreeable picture, a scientific piece of arrangement, or delightful

§ 7. The sea of Copley Fielding. Its exceeding grace and rapidity.

§ 8. Its high aim at character.

melody of color, as to make us feel the utter desolation, the cold, withering, frozen hopelessness of the continuous storm and merciless sea. And this is peculiarly remarkable in his denying himself all color, just in the little bits which an artist of inferior mind would paint in sienna and cobalt. If a piece of broken wreck is allowed to rise for an instant through the boiling foam, though the blue stripe of a sailor's jacket, or a red rag of a flag would do all our hearts good, we are not allowed to have it ; it would make us too comfortable, and prevent us from shivering and shrinking as we look, and the artist, with admirable intention, and most meritorious self-denial, expresses his

piece of wreck with a dark, cold brown. Now we think this aim and effort worthy of the highest

§ 9. But deficiency in the requisite quality of grays.

praise, and we only wish the lesson were taken up and acted on by our other artists ; but Mr. Fielding should remember that nothing of this kind can be done with success unless by the most studied management of the general tones of the picture ; for the eye, deprived of all means of enjoying the gray hues, merely as a contrast to bright points, becomes painfully fastidious in the quality of the hues themselves, and demands for its satisfaction such melodies and richness of gray as may in some degree atone to it for the loss of points of stimulus. That gray which would be taken frankly and freely for an expression of gloom, if it came behind a yellow sail or a red cap, is examined with invidious and merciless intentness when there is nothing to relieve it, and, if not able to bear the investigation, if neither agreeable nor variable in its hue, renders the picture weak instead of impressive, and unpleasant instead of

§ 10. Variety of the grays of nature.

awful. And indeed the management of nature might teach him this ; for though, when using violent contrasts, she frequently makes her gloom somewhat monotonous, the moment she gives up her vivid color, and depends upon her desolation, that moment she begins to steal the greens into her sea-gray, and the browns and yellows into her cloud-gray, and the expression of variously tinted light through all. Nor is Mr. Fielding without a model in art, for the *Land's End*, and *Lowestoffe*, and *Snowstorm*, (in the *Academy*, 1842.) of Turner, are nothing more than passages of the most hopeless, desolate, uncontrasted grays, and yet are three of

the very finest pieces of color that have come from his hand. And we sincerely hope that Mr. Fielding will gradually feel the necessity of such studied melodies of quiet color, and will neither fall back into the old tricks of contrast, nor continue to paint with purple and ink. If he will only make a few careful studies of gray from the mixed atmosphere of spray, rain, and mist of a gale that has been three days hard at work, not of a rainy squall, but of a persevering and powerful storm, and not where the sea is turned into milk and magnesia by a chalk coast, but where it breaks pure and green on gray slate or white granite, as along the cliffs of Cornwall, we think his pictures would present some of the finest examples of high intention and feeling to be found in modern art.

The works of Stanfield evidently, and at all times, proceed from the hand of a man who has both thorough knowledge of his subject, and thorough acquaintance with all the means and principles of art. We never criticise them, be-

§ 11. Works of Stanfield. His perfect knowledge and power.

cause we feel, the moment we look carefully at the drawing of any single wave, that the knowledge possessed by the master is much greater than our own, and therefore believe that if anything offends us in any part of the work, it is nearly certain to be our fault, and not the painter's. The local color of Stanfield's sea is singularly true and powerful, and entirely independent of any tricks of *chiaroscuro*. He will carry a mighty wave up against the sky, and make its whole body dark and substantial against the distant light, using all the while nothing more than chaste and unexaggerated local color to gain the relief. His surface is at once lustrous, transparent, and accurate to a hairbreadth in every curve; and he is entirely independent of dark skies, deep blues, driving spray, or any other means of concealing want of form, or atoning for it. He fears no difficulty, desires no assistance, takes his sea in open daylight, under general sunshine, and paints the *element* in its pure color and complete forms. But

§ 12. But want of feeling. General sum of truth presented by modern art.

we wish that he were less powerful, and more interesting; or that he were a little less Diogenes-like, and did not scorn all that he does not want.

Now that he has shown us what he can do without such aids, we wish he would show us what he can do with

them. He is, as we have already said, wanting in what we have just been praising in Fielding—impressiveness. We should like him to be less clever, and more affecting—less wonderful, and more terrible ; and as the very first step towards such an end, to learn how to conceal. We are, however, trenching upon matters with which we have at present nothing to do ; our concern is now only with truth, and one work of Stanfield alone presents us with as much concentrated knowledge of sea and sky, as, diluted, would have lasted any one of the old masters his life. And let it be especially observed, how extensive and how varied is the truth of our modern masters—how it comprises a complete history of that nature of which, from the ancients, you only here and there can catch a stammering descriptive syllable—how Fielding has given us every character of the quiet lake, Robson * of the mountain tarn, De Wint of the lowland river, Nesfield of the radiant cataract, Harding of the roaring torrent, Fielding of the desolate sea, Stanfield of the blue, open, boundless ocean. Arrange all this in your mind, observe the perfect truth of it in all its parts, compare it with the fragmentary falsities of the ancients, and then, come with me to Turner.

* I ought before to have alluded to the works of the late G. Robson. They are a little disagreeable in execution, but there is a feeling of the character of *deep* calm water in them quite unequalled, and different from the works and thoughts of all other men.

CHAPTER III.

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY TURNER.

I BELIEVE it is a result of the experience of all artists, that it is the easiest thing in the world to give a certain degree of depth and transparency to water ; but that it is next thing to impossible, to give a full impression of surface. If

§ 1. The difficulty of giving surface to smooth water.

no reflection be given—a ripple being supposed—the water looks like lead : if reflection be given, it in nine cases out of ten looks *morbidly* clear and deep, so that we always go down *into* it, even when the artist most wishes us to glide *over* it. Now, this difficulty arises from the very same circumstance which occasions the frequent failure in effect of the best drawn foregrounds, noticed in Section II. Chapter III., the change, namely, of focus necessary in the eye in order to re-

§ 2. Is dependent on the structure of the eye, and the focus by which the reflected rays are perceived.

ceive rays of light coming from different distances. Go to the edge of a pond, in a perfectly calm day, at some place where there is duckweed floating on the surface,—not thick, but a leaf here and there.

Now, you may either see in the water the reflection of the sky, or you may see the duckweed ; but you cannot, by any effort, see both together. If you look for the reflection, you will be sensible of a sudden change or effort in the eye, by which it adapts itself to the reception of the rays which have come all the way from the clouds, have struck on the water, and so been sent up again to the eye. The focus you adopt is one fit for great distance ; and, accordingly, you will feel that you are looking down a great way under the water, while the leaves of the duckweed, though they lie upon the water at the very spot on which you are gazing so intently, are felt only as a vague, uncertain interruption, causing a little confusion in the image below, but entirely indistinguishable as leaves,—and even their color unknown and unperceived. Unless you think of them, you will

not even feel that anything interrupts your sight, so excessively slight is their effect. If, on the other hand, you make up your mind to look for the leaves of the duckweed, you will perceive an instantaneous change in the effort of the eye, by which it becomes adapted to receive near rays—those which have only come from the surface of the pond. You will then see the delicate leaves of the duckweed with perfect clearness, and in vivid green ; but while you do so, you will be able to perceive nothing of the reflections in the very water on which they float—nothing but a vague flashing and melting of light and dark hues, without form or meaning, which, to investigate, or find out what they mean or are, you must quit your hold of the duckweed, and plunge down.

Hence it appears, that whenever we see plain reflections of comparatively distant objects, in near water, we cannot possibly see the surface, and *vice versa* ; so that when in a painting we give the reflections with the same clearness with which they are visible in nature, we presuppose the effort of the eye to look under the surface, and, of course, destroy the surface, and induce an effect of clearness which, perhaps, the artist has not particularly wished to attain, but which he has found himself forced into, by his reflections, in spite of himself. And the reason of this effect of clearness appearing preternatural is, that people are not in the habit of looking at water with the distant focus adapted to the reflections, unless by particular effort. We invariably, under ordinary circumstances, use the surface focus ; and, in consequence, receive nothing more than a vague and confused impression of the reflected colors and lines, however clearly, calmly, and vigorously all may be defined underneath, if we choose to look for them. We do not look for them, but glide along over the surface, catching only playing light and capricious color for evidence of reflection, except where we come to images of objects close to the surface, which the surface focus is of course adapted to receive : and these we see clearly, as of the weeds on the shore, or of sticks rising out of the water, etc. Hence, the ordinary effect of water is only to be rendered by giving the reflections of the *margin* clear and distinct (so clear they usually are in nature, that it is impossible to tell where the

§ 3. Morbid clearness occasioned in painting of water by distinctness of reflections.

water begins :) but the moment we touch the reflection of distant objects, as of high trees or clouds, that instant we must become vague and uncertain in drawing, and, though vivid in color and light as the object itself, quite indistinct in form and

§ 4. How avoided feature. If we take such a piece of water as that by Turner.

in the foreground of Turner's Chateau of Prince Albert, the first impression from it is,—“What a wide *surface*!” We glide over it a quarter of a mile into the picture before we know where we are, and yet the water is as calm and crystalline as a mirror; but we are not allowed to tumble into it, and gasp for breath as we go down,—we are kept upon the surface, though that surface is flashing and radiant with every hue of cloud, and sun, and sky, and foliage. But the secret is in the drawing of these reflections.* We cannot tell when we look *at* them and *for* them, what they mean. They have all character, and are evidently reflections of something definite and determined; but yet they are all uncertain and inexplicable; playing color and palpitating shade, which, though we recognize in an instant for images of something, and feel that the water is bright, and lovely, and calm, we cannot penetrate nor interpret: we are not allowed to go down to them, and we repose, as we should in nature, upon the lustre of the level surface. It is in this power of saying everything, and yet saying nothing too plainly, that the perfection of art here, as in all other cases, consists. But

§ 5. All reflections on distant water are distinct.

as it was before shown in Sect. II. Chap. III. that the focus of the eye required little alteration after the first half mile of distance, it is evident that on the *distant* surface of water, *all* reflections will be seen plainly:

* Not altogether. I believe here, as in a former case, I have attributed far too much influence to this change of focus. In Turner's earlier works the principle is not found. In the rivers of the Yorkshire drawings, every reflection is given clearly, even to the farthest depth, and yet the surface is not lost, and it would deprive the painter of much power if he were not sometimes so to represent them, especially when his object is repose: it being, of course, as lawful for him to choose one adaptation of the sight as another. I have, however, left the above paragraphs as first written, because they are true, although I think they make too much of an unimportant matter. The reader may attribute to them such weight as he thinks fit. He is referred to § 11 of this chapter, and to § 4 of the first chapter of this section

for the same focus adapted to a moderate distance of surface will receive with distinctness rays coming from the sky, or from any other distance, however great. Thus we always see the reflection of Mont Blanc on the Lake of Geneva, whether we take pains to look for it or not, because the water upon which it is cast is itself a mile off; but if we would see the reflection of Mont Blanc in the Lac de Chede, which is close to us, we must take some trouble about the matter, leave the green snakes swimming upon the surface, and plunge for it. Hence reflections, if viewed collectively, are always clear in proportion to the distance of the water on which they are cast. And now look at Turner's Ulleswater, or any of his distant lake expanses, and you will find every crag and line of the hills rendered in them with absolute fidelity, while the near surface shows nothing but a vague confusion of exquisite and lustrous tint. The reflections even of the clouds will be given far off, while those of near boats and figures will be confused and mixed among each other, except just at the water-line.

And now we see what Vandeveld *ought* to have done with the shadow of his ship spoken of in the first chapter of this section. In such a calm, we should in nature, if we had looked for the reflection, have seen it clear from the water-line to the flag on the mainmast; but in so doing, we should have appeared to ourselves to be looking under the water, and should have lost all feeling of surface. When we looked at the surface of the sea,—as we naturally should,—we should have seen the image of the hull absolutely clear and perfect, because that image is cast on distant water; but we should have seen the image of the masts and sails gradually more confused as they descended, and the water close to us would have borne only upon its surface a maze of flashing color and indefinite hue. Had Vandeveld, therefore, given the perfect image of his ship, he would have represented a truth dependent on a particular effort of the eye, and destroyed his surface. But his business was to give, not a distinct reflection, but the colors of the reflection in mystery and disorder upon his near water, all perfectly vivid, but none intelligible; and had he done so, the eye would not have troubled itself to search them out; it would not have cared whence or how the colors came, but it would

§ 6. The error of Vandeveld.

have felt them to be true and right, and rested satisfied upon the polished surface of the clear sea. Of the perfect truth, the best examples I can give are Turner's Saltash and Castle Upnor.

Be it next observed that the reflection of all near objects is, by our fifth rule, not an exact copy of the parts of them which we see above the water, but a totally different view and arrange-

ment of them, that which we should get if we were looking at them from beneath. Hence we see the dark sides of leaves hanging over a stream, in their reflection, though we see the light sides above, and

all objects and groups of objects are thus seen in the reflection under different lights, and in different positions with respect to each other from those which they assume above ; some which we see on the bank being entirely lost in their reflection, and others which we cannot see on the bank brought into view. Hence nature contrives never to repeat herself, and the surface of water is not a mockery, but a new view of what is above it. And this difference in what is represented, as well as the obscurity of the representation, is one of the chief sources by which the sensation of surface is kept up in the reality. The reflection is not so remarkable, it does not attract the eye in the same degree when it is entirely different from the images above, as when it mocks them and repeats them, and we feel that the space and surface have color and character of their own, and that the bank is one thing and the water another. It is by not making this change manifest, and giving underneath a mere duplicate of what is seen above, that artists are apt to destroy the essence and substance of water, and to drop us through it.

Now one instance will be sufficient to show the exquisite care of Turner in this respect. On the left-hand side of his Nottingham, the water (a smooth canal) is terminated by a bank fenced up with wood, on which, just at the edge of the

water, stands a white sign-post. A quarter of a mile back, the hill on which Nottingham Castle

stands rises steeply nearly to the top of the picture. The upper part of this hill is in bright golden light, and the lower in very deep gray shadow, against which the white board of the sign-post is seen entirely in light relief, though, being turned from the light, it is itself in delicate middle tint,

§ 7. Difference in arrangement of parts between the reflected object and its image.

§ 8. Illustrated from the works of Turner.

illuminated only on the edge. But the image of all this in the canal is very different. First, we have the reflection of the piles of the bank, sharp and clear, but under this we have not what we see above it, the dark *base* of the hill, (for this being a quarter of a mile back, we could not see over the fence if we were looking from below,) but the golden summit of the hill, the shadow of the under part having no record nor place in the reflection. But this summit, being very distant, cannot be seen clearly by the eye while its focus is adapted to the surface of the water, and accordingly its reflection is entirely vague and confused : you cannot tell what it is meant for, it is mere playing golden light. But the sign-post, being on the bank close to us, will be reflected clearly, and accordingly its distinct image is seen in the midst of this confusion. But it now is relieved, not against the dark base, but against the illumined summit of the hill, and it appears, therefore, instead of a white space thrown out from blue shade, a dark gray space thrown out from golden light. I do not know that any more magnificent example could be given of concentrated knowledge, or of the daring statement of most difficult truth. For who but this consummate artist would have had courage, even if he had perceived the laws which required it, to undertake in a single small space of water, the painting of an entirely new picture, with all its tones and arrangements altered, —what was made above bright by opposition to blue, being underneath made cool and dark by opposition to gold ;—or would have dared to contradict so boldly the ordinary expectation of the uncultivated eye, to find in the reflection a mockery for the reality ? But the reward is immediate, for not only is the change most grateful to the eye, and most exquisite as composition, but the surface of the water in consequence of it is felt to be as spacious as it is clear, and the eye rests not on the inverted image of the material objects, but on the element which receives them. And we have a farther instance in this passage of the close study which is required to enjoy the works of Turner, for another artist might have altered the reflection or confused it, but he would not have reasoned upon it so as to find out *what the exact alteration must be* ; and if we had tried to account for the reflection, we should have found it false or inaccurate. But

§ 9. The boldness and judgment shown in the observance of it.

the master mind of Turner, without effort, showers its knowledge into every touch, and we have only to trace out even his slightest passages, part by part, to find in them the universal working of the deepest thought, that consistency of every minor truth which admits of and invites the same ceaseless study as the work of nature herself.

There is, however, yet another peculiarity in Turner's painting of smooth water, which, though less deserving of admiration, as being merely a mechanical excellence, is not less wonderful than its other qualities, nor less unique—a peculiar texture, namely, given to the most delicate tints of the surface, when there is little reflection from anything except sky or atmosphere, and which, just at the points where other painters are reduced to paper, gives to the surface of Turner the greatest appearance of substantial liquidity. It is impossible to say how it is produced; it looks like some modification of body color; but it certainly is not body color used as by other men, for I have seen this expedient tried over and over again without success; and it is often accompanied by crumbling touches of a dry brush, which never could have been put upon body color, and which could not have shown through underneath it. As a piece of mechanical excellence, it is one of the most remarkable things in the works of the master; and it brings the truth of his water-painting up to the last degree of perfection, often rendering those passages of it the most attractive and delightful, which from their delicacy and paleness of tint, would have been weak and papery in the hands of any other man. The best instance of it I can give, is, I think, the distance of the Devonport with the Dockyards.

After all, however, there is more in Turner's painting of water surface than any philosophy of reflection, or any peculiarity of means, can account for or accomplish; there is a might and wonder about it which will not admit of our whys and hows. Take, for instance, the picture of the Sun of Venice going to Sea, of 1843, respecting which, however, there are one or two circumstances which may as well be noted besides its water-painting. The reader, if he has not been at Venice, ought to be made aware that the Venetian fishing-boats, almost without exception, carry canvas painted

§ 10. The texture of surface in Turner's painting of calm water.

§ 11. Its united qualities.

with bright colors, the favorite design for the centre being either a cross or a large sun with many rays, the favorite colors being red, orange, and black, blue occurring occasionally. The radiance of these sails and of the bright and grotesque vanes at the mast-heads under sunlight is beyond all painting, but it is strange that, of constant occurrence as these boats are on all the lagoons, Turner alone should have availed himself of them. Nothing could be more faithful than the boat which was the principal object in this picture, in the cut of the sail, the filling of it, the exact height of the boom above the deck, the quartering of it with color, finally and especially, the hanging of the fish-baskets about the bows. All these, however, are comparatively minor merits, (though not the blaze of color which the artist elicited from the right use of these circumstances,) but the peculiar power of the picture was the painting of the sea surface, where there were no reflections to assist it. A stream of splendid color fell from the boat, but that occupied the centre only; in the distance, the city and crowded boats threw down some playing lines, but these still left on each side of the boat a large space of water reflecting nothing but the morning sky. This was divided by an eddying swell, on whose continuous sides the local color of the water was seen, pure aquamarine, (a beautiful occurrence of closely-observed truth,) but still there remained a large blank space of pale water to be treated, the sky above had no distinct details and was pure faint gray, with broken white vestiges of cloud: it gave no help therefore. But there the water lay, no dead gray flat paint, but downright clear, playing, palpable surface, full of indefinite hue, and retiring as regularly and visibly back and far away, as if there had been objects all over it to tell the story by perspective. Now it is the doing of this which tries the painter, and it is his having done this which made me say above that "no man had ever painted the surface of calm water but Turner." The San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina, contained a similar passage, equally fine; in one of the Canale della Guidecca the specific green color of the water is seen in front, with the shadows of the boats thrown on it in purple; all, as it retires, passing into the pure reflective blue.

But Turner is not satisfied with this. He is never altogether

content unless he can, at the same time that he takes advantage of all the placidity of repose, tell us something either about the

past commotion of the water, or of some present stirring of tide or current which its stillness does not show, or give us something or other to think about and reason upon, as well as to look at.

Take a few instances. His *Cowes*, Isle of Wight, is a summer twilight about half an hour, or more, after sunset. Intensity of repose is the great aim throughout, and the unity of tone of the picture is one of the finest things that Turner has ever done. But there is not only quietness, there is the very deepest solemnity in the whole of the light, as well as in the stillness of the vessels ; and Turner wishes to enhance this feeling by representing not only repose, but *power* in repose, the emblem, in the sea, of the quiet ships of war. Accordingly, he takes the greatest possible pains to get his surface polished, calm, and smooth, but he indicates the reflection of a buoy, floating a full quarter of a mile off, by three black strokes with wide intervals between them, the last of which touches the water within twenty yards of the spectator. Now these three reflections can only indicate the farther sides of three rises of an enormous swell, and give by their intervals of separation, a space of from twelve to twenty yards for the breadth of each wave, including the sweep between them, and this swell is farther indicated by the reflection of the new moon falling, in a wide zigzag line. The exceeding majesty which this single circumstance gives to the whole picture, the sublime sensation of power and knowledge of former exertion which we instantly receive from it, if we have but acquaintance with nature enough to understand its language, render this work not only a piece of the most refined truth, (as which I have at present named it,) but to my mind, one of the highest pieces of intellectual art existing.

Again, in the scene on the Loire, with the square precipice and fiery sunset, in the Rivers of France, repose has been aimed at in the same way, and most thoroughly given ; but the immense width of the river at this spot makes it look like a lake or sea, and it was therefore necessary that we should be made thoroughly to understand and

§ 12. Relation of various circumstances of past agitation, etc., by the most trifling incidents, as in the *Cowes*.

§ 13. In scenes on the Loire and Seine.

feel that this is **not** the calm of still water, but the tranquillity of a majestic current. Accordingly, a boat swings at anchor on the right; and the stream, dividing at its bow, flows towards us in two long, dark waves, especial attention to which is enforced by the one on the left being brought across the reflected stream of sunshine, which it separates, and which is broken in the nearer water by the general undulation and agitation caused by the boat's wake; a wake caused by the water's passing it, not by *its* going through the water.

Again, in the Confluence of the Seine and Marne, we have the repose of the wide river stirred by the paddles of the steam-boat, whose plashing we can almost hear, for we are especially compelled to look at them by their being made the central note of the composition—the blackest object in it, opposed to the strongest light,) and this disturbance is not merely caused by the two lines of surge from the boat's wake, for any other painter must have given these, but Turner never rests satisfied till he has told you *all* in his power; and he has not only given the receding surges, but these have gone on to the shore, have struck upon it, and been beaten back from it in another line of weaker contrary surges, whose point of intersection with those of the wake itself is marked by the sudden subdivision and disorder of the waves of the wake on the extreme left, and whose reverted direction is exquisitely given where their lines cross the calm water, close to the spectator, and marked also by the sudden vertical spring of the spray just where they intersect the swell from the boat; and in order that we may fully be able to account for these reverted waves, we are allowed, just at the extreme right-hand limit of the picture, to see the point where the swell from the boat meets the shore. In the Chaise de Gargantua we have the still water lulled by the dead calm which usually precedes the most violent storms, suddenly broken upon by a tremendous burst of wind from the gathered thunder-clouds, scattering the boats, and raising the water into rage, except where it is sheltered by the hills. In the Jumièges and Vernon we have farther instances of local agitation, caused, in the one instance, by a steamer, in the other, by the large water-wheels under the

§ 14. Expression of contrary waves caused by recoil from shore.

§ 15. Various other instances.

bridge, not, observe, a mere splashing about the wheel itself, this is too far off to be noticeable, so that we should not have even known that the objects beneath the bridge were water-wheels, but for the agitation recorded a quarter of a mile down the river, where its current crosses the sunlight. And thus there will scarcely ever be found a piece of quiet water by Turner, without some story in it of one kind or another; sometimes a slight, but beautiful incident—oftener, as in the *Cowes*, something on which the whole sentiment and intention of the picture in a great degree depends; but invariably presenting some new instance of varied knowledge and observation, some fresh appeal to the highest faculties of the mind.

Of extended surfaces of water, as rendered by Turner, the *Loch Katrine* and *Derwent-water*, of the *Illustrations to Scott*, and the *Loch Lomond*, vignette in *Rogers's Poems*, are charac-

§ 16. Turner's painting of distant expanses of water. Calm, interrupted by ripple.

teristic instances. The first of these gives us the most distant part of the lake entirely under the influence of a light breeze, and therefore entirely without reflections of the objects on its borders;

but the whole near half is untouched by the wind, and on that is cast the image of the upper part of *Ben-Venue* and of the islands. The second gives us the surface, with just so much motion upon it as to prolong, but not to destroy, the reflections of the dark woods,—reflections only interrupted by the ripple of the boat's wake. And the third gives us an

§ 17. And ripple, crossed by sunshine.

example of the whole surface so much affected by ripple as to bring into exercise all those laws which

we have seen so grossly violated by *Canaletto*. We see in the nearest boat that though the lines of the gunwale are much blacker and more conspicuous than that of the cutwater, yet the gunwale lines, being nearly horizontal, have no reflection whatsoever; while the line of the cutwater, being vertical, has a distinct reflection of three times its own length. But even these tremulous reflections are only visible as far as the islands; beyond them, as the lake retires into distance, we find it receives only the reflection of the gray light from the clouds, and runs in one flat white field up between the hills; and besides all this, we have another phenomenon, quite new, given to us,—the brilliant gleam of light along the centre of the lake. This is not

caused by ripple, for it is cast on a surface rippled all over ; but it is what we could not have without ripple,—the light of a passage of sunshine. I have already (Chap. I., § 9) explained the cause of this phenomenon, which never can by any possibility take place on calm water, being the multitudinous reflection of the sun from the sides of the ripples, causing an appearance of local light and shadow ; and being dependent, like real light and shadow, on the passage of the clouds, though the dark parts of the water are the reflections of the clouds, not the shadows of them ; and the bright parts are the reflections of the sun, and not the light of it. This little vignette, then, will entirely complete the system of Turner's universal truth in quiet water. We have seen every phenomenon given by him,—the clear reflection, the prolonged reflection, the reflection broken by ripple, and finally the ripple broken by light and shade ; and it is especially to be observed how careful he is, in this last case, when he uses the apparent light and shade, to account for it by showing us in the whiteness of the lake beyond, its universal subjection to ripple.

We have not spoken of Turner's magnificent drawing of distant rivers, which, however, is dependent only on more complicated application of the same laws, with exquisite perspective.

§ 18. His drawing of distant rivers. The sweeps of river in the Dryburgh, (Illustrations to Scott,) and Melrose, are bold and characteristic examples, as well as the Rouen from St. Catherine's Hill, and the Caudebec, in the Rivers of France. The only thing which in these works requires particular attention, is the care with which the height of the observer above the river is indicated by the loss of the reflections of its banks. This is, perhaps, shown most clearly in the Caudebec. If we had been on a level with the river, its whole surface would have been darkened by the reflection of the steep and high banks ; but being far above it, we can see no more of the image than we could of the hill itself, if it were actually reversed under the water ; and therefore we see that Turner gives us only a narrow line of dark water, immediately under the precipice, the broad surface reflecting only the sky. This is also finely shown on the left-hand side of the Dryburgh.

But all these early works of the artist have been eclipsed by

some recent drawings of Switzerland. These latter are not to be described by any words, but they must be noted here not only as presenting records of lake effect on grander scale, and of more imaginative character than any other of his works, but as combining effects of the surface of mist with the surface of water. Two or three of the Lake of Lucerne, seen from above, give the melting of the mountain promontories beneath into the clear depth, and above into the clouds; one of Constance shows the vast lake at evening, seen not as water, but its surface covered with low white mist, lying league beyond league in the twilight like a fallen space of moony cloud; one of Goldau shows the Lake of Zug appearing through the chasm of a thunder-cloud under sunset, its whole surface one blaze of fire, and the promontories of the hills thrown out against it, like spectres; another of Zurich gives the playing of the green waves of the river among white streams of moonlight: two purple sunsets on the Lake of Zug are distinguished for the glow obtained without positive color, the rose and purple tints being in great measure brought by opposition out of browns: finally, a drawing executed in 1845 of the town of Lucerne from the lake is unique for its expression of water surface reflecting the clear green hue of sky at twilight.

It will be remembered that it was said above, that Turner was the only painter who had ever represented the surface of calm or the *force* of agitated water. He obtains this expression of force in falling or running water by fearless and full rendering of its forms. He never loses himself and his subject in the splash of the fall—his presence of mind never fails as he goes down; he does not blind us with the spray, or veil the countenance of his fall with its own drapery. A little crumbling white, or lightly rubbed paper, will soon give the effect of indiscriminate foam; but nature gives more than foam—she shows beneath it, and through it, a peculiar character of exquisitely studied form bestowed on every wave and line of fall; and it is this variety of definite character which Turner always aims at, rejecting, as much as possible, everything that conceals or overwhelms it. Thus, in the Upper Fall of the Tees, though the whole basin of the fall is blue and dim with the rising vapor, yet the whole

§ 19. And of surface associated with mist.

§ 20. His drawing of falling water, with peculiar expression of weight.

attention of the spectator is directed to that which it was peculiarly difficult to render, the concentric zones and delicate curves of the falling water itself ; and it is impossible to express with what exquisite accuracy these are given. They are the characteristic of a powerful stream descending without impediment or break, but from a narrow channel, so as to expand as it falls. They are the constant form which such a stream assumes as it descends ; and yet I think it would be difficult to point to another instance of their being rendered in art. You will find nothing in the waterfalls even of our best painters, but springing lines of parabolic descent, and splashing, shapeless foam, and, in consequence, though they may make you understand the swiftness of the water, they never let you feel the weight of it ; the stream in their hands looks *active*, not *supine*, as if it leaped, not as if it fell. Now water will leap a

§ 21. The abandonment and plunge of great cataracts. How given by him.

little way, it will leap down a weir or over a stone, but it *tumbles* over a high fall like this ; and it is when we have lost the parabolic line, and arrived at the catenary,—when we have lost the *spring* of the fall, and arrived at the *plunge* of it, that we begin really to feel its weight and wildness. Where water takes its first leap from the top, it is cool, and collected, and uninteresting, and mathematical, but it is when it finds that it has got into a scrape, and has farther to go than it thought for, that its character comes out ; it is then that it begins to writhe, and twist, and sweep out zone after zone in wilder stretching as it falls, and to send down the rocket-like, lance-pointed, whizzing shafts at its sides, sounding for the bottom. And it is this prostration, this hopeless abandonment of its ponderous power to the air, which is always peculiarly expressed by Turner, and especially in the case before us ; while our other artists, keeping to the parabolic line, where they do not lose themselves in smoke and foam, make their cataract look muscular and wiry, and may consider themselves fortunate if they can keep it from stopping. I believe the majesty of motion which Turner has given by these concentric catenary lines must be felt even by those who have never seen a high waterfall, and therefore cannot appreciate their exquisite fidelity to nature.

In the Chain Bridge over the Tees, this passiveness and

swinging of the water to and fro are yet more remarkable ; while we have another characteristic of a great waterfall given to us, that the wind, in this instance coming up the valley against the current, takes the spray up off the edges, and carries it back in little torn, reverted rags and threads, seen in delicate form against the darkness on the left. But we must understand a little more about the nature of running water before we can appreciate the drawing either of this, or any other of Turner's torrents.

When water, not in very great body, runs in a rocky bed much interrupted by hollows, so that it can rest every now and then in a pool as it goes along, it does not acquire a continuous velocity of motion. It pauses after every leap, and curdles about, and rests a little, and then goes on again ; and if in this comparatively tranquil and rational state of mind it meets with an obstacle, as a rock or stone, it parts on each side of it with a little bubbling foam, and goes round ; if it comes to a step in its bed, it leaps it lightly, and then after a little plashing at the bottom, stops again to take breath. But if its bed be on a continuous slope, not much interrupted by hollows so that it cannot rest, or if its own mass be so increased by flood that its usual resting-places are not sufficient for it, but that it is perpetually pushed out of them by the following current, before it has had time to tranquillize itself, it of course gains velocity with every yard that it runs ; the impetus got at one leap is carried to the credit of the next, until the whole stream becomes one mass of unchecked, accelerating motion. Now when water in this state comes to an obstacle, it does not part at it, but clears it, like a race-horse ; and when it comes to a hollow, it does not fill it up and run out leisurely at the other side, but it rushes down into it and comes up again on the other side, as a ship into the hollow of the sea. Hence the whole appearance of the bed of the stream is changed, and all the lines of the water altered in their nature. The quiet stream is a succession of leaps and pools ; the leaps are light and springy, and parabolic, and make a great deal of splashing when they tumble into the pool ; then we have a space of quiet curdling water, and another similar leap below. But the stream when it has gained

§ 22. Difference in the action of water, when continuous and when interrupted. The interrupted stream fills the hollows of its bed.

an impetus takes the shape of its bed, never stops, is equally deep and equally swift everywhere, goes down into every hollow, not with a leap, but with a swing, not foaming, nor splashing, but in the bending line of a strong sea-wave, and comes up again on the other side, over rock and ridge, with the ease of a bounding leopard; if it meet a rock three or four feet above the level of its bed, it will neither part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clear it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, coming down again as smoothly on the other side; the whole surface of the surge being drawn into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, but foamless, except in places where the form of the bed opposes itself at some direct angle to such a line of fall, and causes a breaker; so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea, with this only difference, that the torrent-waves always break backwards, and sea-waves forwards.

§ 23. But the continuous stream takes the shape of its bed. Thus, then, in the water which has gained an impetus, we have the most exquisite arrangements of curved lines, perpetually changing from convex to concave, and *vice versa*, following every swell and hollow of the bed with their modulating grace, and all in unison of motion, presenting perhaps the most beautiful series of inorganic forms which nature can possibly produce; for the sea runs too much into similar and concave curves with sharp edges, but every motion of the torrent is united, and all its curves are modifications of beautiful line.

We see, therefore, why Turner seizes on these curved lines of the torrent, not only as being among the most beautiful forms of nature, but because they are an instant expression of the utmost power and velocity, and tell us how the torrent has been flowing before we see it. For the leap and splash might be seen in the sudden freakishness of a quiet stream, or the fall of a rivulet over a mill-dam; but the undulating line is the *exclusive* attribute of the mountain-torrent,* whose fall and fury have made the valleys

§ 24. Its exquisite curved lines.

§ 25. Turner's careful choice of the historical truth.

* On a large scale it is so, but the same lines are to be seen for the moment whenever water becomes exceedingly rapid, and yet feels the bottom as it passes, being not thrown up or cast clear of it. In general, the drawing of water fails from being too interrupted, the forms flung hither and

echo for miles ; and thus the moment we see one of its curves over a stone in the foreground, we know how far it has come, and how fiercely. And in the drawing we have been speaking of, the lower fall of the Tees, in the foreground of the Killiecrankie and Rhymer's Glen, and of the St. Maurice, in Rogers's Italy, we shall find the most exquisite instances of the use of such lines ; but the most perfect of all in the Llanthony Abbey,

which may be considered as the standard of torrent-drawing. The chief light of the picture here falls upon the surface of the stream, swelled by recent rain, and its mighty waves come rolling

down close to the spectator, green and clear, but pale with anger, in gigantic, unbroken, oceanic curves, bending into each other without break or foam, though jets of fiery spray are cast into the air along the rocky shore, and rise in the sunshine in dusty vapor. The whole surface is one united race of mad motion ; all the waves dragged, as I have described, into lines and furrows by their swiftness, and every one of these fine forms is drawn with the most studied chiaroscuro of delicate color, grays and greens, as silvery and pure as the finest passages of Paul Veronese, and with a refinement of execution which the eye strains itself in looking into. The rapidity and gigantic force of this torrent, the exquisite refinement of its color, and the vividness of foam which is obtained through a general middle

thither, and broken up and covered with bright touches, instead of being wrought out in their real unities of curvature. It is difficult enough to draw a curved surface, even when it is rough and has texture ; but to indicate the varied and sweeping forms of a crystalline and polished substance, requires far more skill and patience than most artists possess. In some respects, it is impossible. I do not suppose any means of art are capable of rightly expressing the smooth, multitudinous rippling of a rapid rivulet of shallow water, giving its transparency lustre and fully-developed forms ; and the greater number of the lines and actions of torrent-waves are equally inexpressible. The effort should, nevertheless, always be made, and whatever is sacrificed in color, freedom, or brightness, the real contours ought always in some measure to be drawn, as a careful draughtsman secures those of flesh, or any other finely-modelled surface. It is better, in many respects, the drawing should miss of being *like* water, than that it should miss in this one respect the grandeur of water. Many tricks of scratching and dashing will bring out a deceptive resemblance ; the determined and laborious rendering of contour alone secures sublimity.

tint, render it about the most perfect piece of painting of running water in existence.

Now this picture is, as was noticed in our former reference to it, full of expression of every kind of motion : the clouds are in wild haste ; the sun is gleaming fast and fitfully through the leaves ; the rain drifting away along the hill-side ; and the torrent, the principal object, to complete the impression, is made the wildest thing of all and not only wild before us, and with us, but bearing with it in its every motion, from its long course, the record of its rage. Observe how differently Turner uses his torrent when the spirit of the picture is repose. In the *Mercury and Argus*, we have also a stream in the foreground ; but, in coming down to us, we see it stopping twice in two quiet and glassy pools, upon which the drinking cattle cast an unstirred image. From the nearest of these, the water leaps in three cascades into another basin close to us ; it trickles in silver threads through the leaves at its edge, and falls tinkling and splashing (though in considerable body) into the pool, stirring its quiet surface, at which a bird is stooping to drink, with concentric and curdling ripples which divide round the stone at its farthest border, and descend in sparkling foam over the lip of the basin. Thus we find, in every case, the system of Turner's truth entirely unbroken, each phase and phenomenon of nature being recorded exactly where it is most valuable and impressive.

We have not, however, space to follow out the variety of his torrent-drawing. The above two examples are characteristic of the two great divisions or classes of torrents—that whose motion is continuous, and whose motion is interrupted : all drawing of running water will resolve itself into the representation of one or other of these. The descent of the distant stream in the vignette to the *Boy of Egremont* is slight, but very striking ; and the *Junction of the Greta and Tees*, a singular instance of the bold drawing of the complicated forms of a shallow stream among multitudinous rocks. A still finer example occurs in a recent drawing of *Dazio Grande*, on the *St. Gothard*, the waves of the *Toccia*, clear and blue, fretting among the granite débris which were brought down by the storm that destroyed the whole road. In the *Ivy bridge* the subject is the

§ 27. And of the interrupted torrent in the *Mercury and Argus*.

§ 28. Various cases.

rest of the torrent in a pool among fallen rocks, the forms of the stones are seen through the clear brown water, and their reflections mingle with those of the foliage.

More determined efforts have at all periods been made in sea painting than in torrent painting, yet less successful. As above stated, it is easy to obtain a resemblance of broken running water by tricks and dexterities, but the sea *must* be legitimately drawn ; it cannot be given as utterly disorganized and confused, its weight and mass must be expressed, and the efforts at expression of it end in failure with all but the most powerful men ; even with these few a partial success must be considered worthy of the highest praise.

As the right rendering of the Alps depends on power of drawing snow, so the right painting of the sea must depend, at least in all coast scenery, in no small measure on the power of drawing foam. Yet there are two conditions of foam of invariable occurrence on breaking waves, of which I have never seen the slightest record attempted ; first the thick creamy curdling overlapping massy form which remains for a moment only after the fall of the wave, and is seen in perfection in its running up the beach ; and secondly, the thin white coating into which this subsides, which opens into oval gaps and clefts, marbling the waves over their whole surface, and connecting the breakers on a flat shore by long dragging streams of white.

It is evident that the difficulty of expressing either of these two conditions must be immense. The lapping and curdling form is difficult enough to catch even when the lines of its undulation alone are considered ; but the lips, so to speak, which lie along these lines, are full, projecting, and marked by beautiful light and shade ; each has its high light, a gradation into shadow of indescribable delicacy, a bright reflected light and a dark cast shadow ; to draw all this requires labor, and care, and firmness of work, which, as I imagine, must always, however skilfully bestowed, destroy all impression of wildness, accidentalism, and evanescence, and so kill the sea. Again, the openings in the thin subsided foam in their irregular modifications of circular and oval shapes dragged hither and thither, would be hard enough to draw even if they could be seen on a flat sur-

§ 29. Sea painting.
Impossibility of
truly representing
foam.

face ; instead of which, every one of the openings is seen in undulation on a tossing surface, broken up over small surges and ripples, and so thrown into perspectives of the most hopeless intricacy. Now it is not easy to express the lie of a pattern with oval openings on the folds of drapery. I do not know that any one under the mark of Veronese or Titian could even do this as it ought to be done, yet in drapery much stiffness and error may be overlooked ; not so in sea,—the slightest inaccuracy, the slightest want of flow and freedom in the line, is attached by the eye in a moment of high treason, and I believe success to be impossible.

Yet there is not a wave or any violently agitated sea on which both these forms do not appear, the latter especially, after some time of storm, extends over their whole surfaces ; the reader sees, therefore, why I said that sea could only be painted by means of more or less dexterous conventionalisms, since two of its most enduring phenomena cannot be represented at all.

Again, as respects the form of breakers on an even shore, there is difficulty of no less formidable kind. There is in them an irreconcilable mixture of fury and formalism. Their hollow surface is marked by parallel lines, like those of a smooth mill-weir, and graduated by reflected and transmitted lights of the most wonderful intricacy, its curve being at the same time necessarily of mathematical purity and precision ; yet at the top of this curve, when it nods over, there is a sudden laxity and giving way, the water swings and jumps along the ridge like a shaken chain, and the motion runs from part to part as it does through a serpent's body. Then the wind is at work on the extreme edge, and instead of letting it fling itself off naturally, it supports it, and drives it back, or scrapes it off, and carries it bodily away ; so that the spray at the top is in a continual transition between forms projected by their own weight, and forms blown and carried off with their weight overcome ; then at last, when it has come down, who shall say what shape that may be called, which shape has none of the great crash where it touches the beach.

I think it is that last crash which is the great taskmaster. Nobody can do anything with it. I have seen Copley Fielding come very close to the jerk and nod of the lifted threatening

§ 30. Character of
shore-breakers,
also inexpressible.

edge, curl it very successfully, and without any look of its having been in papers, down nearly to the beach, but the final fall has no thunder in it. Turner has tried hard for it once or twice, but it will not do. The moment is given in the Sidon of the Bible Illustrations, and more elaborately in a painting of Bamborough ; in both these cases there is little foam at the bottom, and the fallen breaker looks like a wall, yet grand always ; and in the latter picture very beautifully assisted in expression by the tossing of a piece of cable, which some figures are dragging ashore, and which the breaker flings into the air as it falls. Perhaps the most successful rendering of the forms was in the Hero and Leander, but there the drawing was rendered easier by the powerful effect of light which disguised the foam.

It is not, however, from the shore that Turner usually studies his sea. Seen from the land, the curl of the breakers, even in nature, is somewhat uniform and monotonous ; the size of the waves out at sea is uncomprehended, and those nearer the eye seem to succeed and resemble each other, to move slowly to the beach, and to break in the same lines and forms.

§ 31. Their effect,
how injured when
seen from the
shore.

Afloat even twenty yards from the shore, we receive a totally different impression. Every wave around us appears vast—every one different from all the rest—and the breakers present, now that we see them with their backs towards us, the grand, extended, and varied lines of long curvature, which are peculiarly expressive both of velocity and power. Recklessness, before unfelt, is manifested in the mad, perpetual, changeful, undirected motion, not of wave after wave, as it appears from the shore, but of the very same water rising and falling. Of waves that successively approach and break, each appears to the mind a separate individual, whose part being performed, it perishes, and is succeeded by another ; and there is nothing in this to impress us with the idea of restlessness, any more than in any successive and continuous functions of life and death. But it is when we perceive that it is no succession of wave, but the same water constantly rising, and crashing, and recoiling, and rolling in again in new forms and with fresh fury, that we perceive the perturbed spirit, and feel the intensity of its unwearyed rage. The sensation of power is also trebled : for not only is the vast-

ness of apparent size much increased, but the whole action is different; it is not a passive wave rolling sleepily forward until it tumbles heavily, prostrated upon the beach, but a sweeping exertion of tremendous and living strength, which does not now appear to *fall*, but to *burst* upon the shore; which never perishes, but recoils and recovers.

Aiming at these grand characters of the Sea, Turner almost always places the spectator, not on the shore, but twenty or thirty yards from it, beyond the first range of the breakers, as in the Land's End, Fowey, Dunbar, and Laugharne.

§ 32. Turner's expression of heavy rolling sea.

The latter has been well engraved, and may be taken as a standard of the expression of fitfulness and power. The grand division of the whole space of the sea by a few dark continuous furrows of tremendous swell, (the breaking of one of which alone has strewed the rocks in front with ruin,) furnishes us with an estimate of space and strength, which at once reduces the men upon the shore to insects; and yet through this terrific simplicity there is indicated a fitfulness and fury in the tossing of the individual lines, which give to the whole sea a wild, unwearied, reckless incoherency, like that of an enraged multitude, whose masses act together in frenzy, while not one individual feels as another. Especial attention is to be directed to the flatness of all the lines, for the same principle holds in sea which we have seen in mountains. All the size and sublimity of nature are given not by the height, but by the breadth of her masses: and Turner, by following her in her sweeping lines, while he does not lose the elevation of its surges, adds in a tenfold degree to their power: farther, observe the peculiar expression of *weight* which there is in Turner's

§ 33. With peculiar expression of weight.

waves, precisely of the same kind which we saw in his waterfall. We have not a cutting, springing, elastic line—no jumping or leaping in the waves: *that* is the characteristic of Chelsea Reach or Hampstead Ponds in a storm. But the surges roll and plunge with such prostration and hurling of their mass against the shore, that we feel the rocks are shaking under them; and, to add yet more to this impression, observe how little, comparatively, they are broken by the wind; above the floating wood, and along the shore, we have indication of a line of torn spray; but it is a mere fringe along



PORT RUYSDAEL.
From a painting by Turner.

the ridge of the surge—no interference with its gigantic body. The wind has no power over its tremendous unity of force and weight. Finally, observe how, on the rocks on the left, the violence and swiftness of the rising wave are indicated by precisely the same lines which we saw were indicative of fury in the torrent. The water on these rocks is the body of the wave which has just broken, rushing up over them ; and in doing so, like the torrent, it does not break, nor foam, nor part upon the rock, but accommodates itself to every one of its swells and hollows, with undulating lines, whose grace and variety might alone serve us for a day's study ; and it is only where two streams of this rushing water meet in the hollow of the rock, that their force is shown by the vertical bound of the spray.

In the distance of this grand picture, there are two waves which entirely depart from the principle observed by all the rest, and spring high into the air. They have a message for us which it is important that we should understand.

§ 34. Peculiar action of recoiling waves.

Their leap is not a preparation for breaking, neither is it caused by their meeting with a rock. It is caused

by their encounter with the recoil of the preceding wave. When a large surge, in the act of breaking, just as it curls over, is hurled against the face either of a wall or of a vertical rock, the sound of the blow is not a crash nor a roar ; it is a report as loud as, and in every respect similar to, that of a great gun, and the wave is dashed back from the rock with force scarcely diminished, but reversed in direction,—it now recedes from the shore, and at the instant that it encounters the following breaker, the result is the vertical bound of both which is here rendered by Turner. Such a recoiling wave will proceed out to sea through ten or twelve ranges of following breakers, before it is overpowered. The effect of the encounter is more completely and palpably given in the Quillebœuf, in the Rivers of France. It is peculiarly instructive here, as informing us of the nature of the coast, and the force of the waves, far more clearly than any spray about the rocks themselves could have done. But the

§ 35. And of the stroke of a breaker on the shore.

effect of the blow at the shore itself is given in the Land's End, and vignette to Lycidas. Under favorable circumstances, with an advancing tide under a heavy gale, where the breakers feel the shore underneath

them a moment before they touch the rock, so as to nod over when they strike, the effect is nearly incredible except to an eyewitness. I have seen the whole body of the wave rise in one white, vertical, broad fountain, eighty feet above the sea, half of it beaten so fine as to be borne away by the wind, the rest turning in the air when exhausted, and falling back with a weight and crash like that of an enormous waterfall. This is given most completely in the *Lycidas*, and the blow of a less violent wave among broken rocks, not meeting it with an absolute wall, along the shore of the *Land's End*. This last picture is a study

§ 36. General
character of sea
on a rocky coast
given by Turner
in the *Land's End*.

of sea whose whole organization has been broken up by constant recoils from a rocky coast. The *Laugharne* gives the surge and weight of the ocean in a gale, on a comparatively level shore ; but the *Land's End*, the entire disorder of the surges when every one of them, divided and entangled among promontories as it rolls in, and beaten back part by part from walls of rock on this side and that side, recoils like the defeated division of a great army, throwing all behind it into disorder, breaking up the succeeding waves into vertical ridges, which in their turn, yet more totally shattered upon the shore, retire in more hopeless confusion, until the whole surface of the sea becomes one dizzy whirl of rushing, writhing, tortured, undirected rage, bounding, and crashing, and coiling in an anarchy of enormous power, subdivided into myriads of waves, of which every one is not, be it remembered, a separate surge, but part and portion of a vast one, actuated by internal power, and giving in every direction the mighty undulation of impetuous line which glides over the rocks and writhes in the wind, overwhelming the one, and piercing the other with the form, fury, and swiftness of a sheet of lambent fire. And throughout the rendering of all this, there is not one false curve given, not one which is not the perfect expression of visible motion ; and the forms of the infinite sea are drawn throughout with that utmost mastery of art which, through the deepest study of every line, makes every line appear the wildest child of chance, while yet each is in itself a subject and a picture different from all else around. Of the color of this magnificent sea I have before spoken ; it is a solemn green gray, (with its foam seen dimly through the dark-

ness of twilight,) modulated with the fulness, changefulness, and sadness of a deep, wild melody.

The greater number of Turner's paintings of open sea belong to a somewhat earlier period than these drawings; nor, generally speaking, are they of equal value. It appears to me that the

artist had at that time either less knowledge of, or less delight in, the characteristics of deep water than

§ 37. Open seas of Turner's earlier times.

of coast sea, and that, in consequence, he suffered

himself to be influenced by some of the qualities of the Dutch sea-painters. In particular, he borrowed from them the habit of casting a dark shadow on the near waves, so as to bring out a stream of light behind; and though he did this in a more legitimate way than they, that is to say, expressing the light by touches on the foam, and indicating the shadow as cast on foamy surface, still the habit has induced much feebleness and conventionality in the pictures of the period. His drawing of the waves was also somewhat petty and divided, small forms covered with white flat spray, a condition which I doubt not the artist has seen on some of the shallow Dutch seas, but which I have never met with myself, and of the rendering of which therefore I cannot speak. Yet even in these, which I think among the poorest works of the painter, the expressions of breeze, motion, and light, are very marvellous; and it is instructive to compare them either with the lifeless works of the Dutch themselves, or with any modern imitations of them, as for instance with the seas of Callcott, where all the light is white and all the shadows gray, where no distinction is made between water and foam, or between real and reflective shadow, and which are generally without evidence of the artists having ever seen the sea.

Some pictures, however, belonging to this period of Turner are free from the Dutch infection, and show the real power of the artist. A very important one is in the possession of Lord Francis Egerton, somewhat heavy in its forms, but remarkable for the grandeur of distance obtained at the horizon; a much smaller, but more powerful example is the Port Ruysdael in the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq., with which I know of no work at all comparable for the expression of the white, wild, cold, comfortless waves of northern sea, even though the sea is almost

subordinate to the awful rolling clouds. Both these pictures are very gray. The *Pas de Calais* has more color, and shows more art than either, yet is less impressive. Recently, two marines of the same subdued color have appeared (1843) among his more radiant works. One, *Ostend*, somewhat forced and affected, but the other, also called *Port Ruysdael*, is among the most perfect sea pictures he has produced, and especially remarkable as being painted without one marked opposition either of color or of shade, all quiet and simple even to an extreme, so that the picture was exceedingly unattractive at first sight. The shadow of the pier-head on the near waves is marked solely by touches indicative of reflected light, and so mysteriously that when the picture is seen near, it is quite untraceable, and comes into existence as the spectator retires. It is thus of peculiar truth and value; and instructive as a contrast to the dark shadows of his earlier time.

Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights, and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast,* which hang in ropes and

§ 38. Effect of sea after prolonged storm.

* The “yesty waves” of Shakspeare have made the likeness familiar, and probably most readers take the expression as merely equivalent to “foamy;” but Shakspeare knew better. Sea-foam does not, under ordinary circumstances, last a moment after it is formed, but disappears, as above described, in a mere white film. But the foam of a prolonged tempest is altogether different; it is “whipped” foam,—thick, permanent, and, in a foul or discolored sea, very ugly, especially in the way it hangs about the tops of the waves, and gathers into clotted concretions before the driving wind. The sea looks truly working or fermenting. The following passage from Fenimore Cooper is an interesting confirmation of the rest of the above description, which may be depended upon as entirely free from exaggeration:—“For the first time I now witnessed a tempest at sea. Gales, and pretty hard ones, I had often seen, but the force of the wind on this occasion as much exceeded that in ordinary gales of wind, as the force of these had exceeded that of a whole-sail breeze. The seas seemed crushed; the pressure of the swooping atmosphere, as the currents of the air went howling over the surface of the ocean, fairly preventing them

wreaths from wave to wave, and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery, from its edge ; these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each ; the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract ; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it as described above, (Section III. Chapter VI. § 13,) and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist ; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave ; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all this chaos ; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air ; that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark or natural evidence of position is left ; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract. Suppose the effect of the first sunbeam sent from above to show this annihilation to itself, and you have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842—the Snow-storm, one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light that has ever been put on canvas, even by Turner. Of course it was not understood ; his finest works never are ; but from rising ; or where a mound of water did appear, it was scooped up and borne off in spray, as the axe dubs inequalities from the log. When the day returned, a species of lurid, sombre light was diffused over the watery waste, though nothing was visible but the ocean and the ship. Even the sea-birds seemed to have taken refuge in the caverns of the adjacent coast, none reappearing with the dawn. The air was full of spray, and it was with difficulty that the eye could penetrate as far into the humid atmosphere as half a mile.’—*Miles Wallingford*. Half a mile is an over-estimate in coast.

there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this, for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time, and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through. To those who have, it is one of the noblest lessons of nature.

But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the *Slave Ship*, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of

§ 39. Turner's noblest work, the painting of the deep open sea in the *Slave Ship*.

1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep-drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges, the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendor which burns like gold and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty* ship as it labors amidst

* She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses.

the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight,—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.

I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception—ideal in the highest sense of the word—is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated knowledge of a life ; its color is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvas is a perfect composition ; its drawing as accurate as fearless ; the ship buoyant, bending, and full of motion ; its tones as true as they are wonderful ; * and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions—(completing thus the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable Sea.

§ 40. Its united excellences and perfection as a whole.

* There is a piece of tone of the same kind, equal in one part, but not so united with the rest of the picture, in the storm scene illustrative of the Antiquary,—a sunset light on polished sea. I ought to have particularly mentioned the sea in the Lowestoffe, as a piece of the cutting motion of shallow water, under storm, altogether in gray, which should be especially contrasted, as a piece of color, with the grays of Vandevelde. And the sea in the Great Yarmouth should have been noticed for its expression of water in violent agitation, seen in enormous extent from a great elevation. There is almost every form of sea in it,—rolling waves dashing on the pier—successive breakers rolling to the shore—a vast horizon of multitudinous waves—and winding canals of calm water along the sands, bringing fragments of bright sky down into their yellow waste. There is hardly one of the views of the Southern Coast which does not give some new condition or circumstance of sea.

SECTION VI.

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER I.

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.

WE have now arrived at the consideration of what was, with the old masters, the subject of most serious and perpetual study. If they do not give us truth here, they cannot have the faculty of truth in them ; for foliage is the chief component part of all their pictures, and is finished by them with a care and labor which, if bestowed without attaining truth, must prove either their total bluntness of perception, or total powerlessness of hand. With the Italian school I can scarcely recollect a single instance in which foliage does not form the greater part of the picture ; in fact, they are rather painters of tree-portrait than landscape painters ; for rocks, and sky, and architecture are usually mere accessories and backgrounds to the dark masses of laborious foliage, of which the composition principally consists. Yet we shall be less detained by the examination of foliage than by our former subjects ; since where specific form is organized and complete, and the occurrence of the object universal, it is easy, without requiring any laborious attention in the reader, to demonstrate to him quite as much of the truth or falsehood of various representations of it, as may serve to determine the character and rank of the painter.

It will be best to begin as nature does, with the stems and branches, and then to put the leaves on. And in speaking of trees generally, be it observed, when I say *all* trees, I mean only those ordinary forest or copse trees of Europe, which are the

chief subjects of the landscape painter. I do not mean to include every kind of foliage which by any accident can find its way into a picture, but the ordinary trees of Europe,—oak, elm, ash, hazel, willow, birch, beech, poplar, chestnut, pine, mulberry, olive, ilex, carubbe, and such others. I do not purpose to examine the characteristics of each tree; it will be enough

to observe the laws common to all. First, then, neither the stems nor the boughs of any of the above trees *taper*, except where they fork. Where-

ever a stem sends off a branch, or a branch a lesser bough, or a lesser bough a bud, the stem or the branch is, on the instant, less in diameter by the exact quantity of the branch or the bough they have sent off, and they remain of the same diameter; or if there be any change, rather increase than diminish until they send off another branch or bough. This law is imperative and without exception; no bough, nor stem, nor twig, ever tapering or becoming narrower towards its extremity by a hairbreadth, save where it parts with some portion of its substance at a fork or bud, so that if all the twigs and sprays at the top and sides of the tree, which are, and *have been*, could be united without loss of space, they would form a round log of the diameter of the trunk from which they spring.

But as the trunks of most trees send off twigs and sprays of light under foliage, of which every individual fibre takes precisely its own thickness of wood from the parent stem, and as

many of these drop off, leaving nothing but a small excrescence to record their existence, there is frequently a slight and delicate appearance of tapering

bestowed on the trunk itself; while the same operation takes place much more extensively in the branches, it being natural to almost all trees to send out from their young limbs more wood than they can support, which, as the stem increases, gets contracted at the point of insertion, so as to check the flow of the sap, and then dies and drops off, leaving all along the bough, first on one side, then on another, a series of small excrescences, sufficient to account for a degree of tapering, which is yet so very slight, that if we select a portion of a branch with no real fork or living bough to divide it or diminish it, the tapering is scarcely to be detected by the eye; and if we select a portion

§ 2. Laws common to all forest trees. Their branches do not taper, but only divide.

§ 3. Appearance of tapering caused by frequent buds.

without such evidences of past ramification, there will be found none whatsoever.

But nature takes great care and pains to conceal this uniformity in her boughs. They are perpetually parting with little sprays here and there, which steal away their substance cautiously, and where the eye does not perceive the theft, until, a little way above, it feels the loss ; and in the upper parts of the tree, the ramifications take place so constantly and delicately, that the effect upon the eye is precisely the same as if the boughs actually tapered, except here and there, where some avaricious one, greedy of substance, runs on for two or three yards without parting with anything, and becomes ungraceful in so doing.

§ 4. And care of nature to conceal the parallelism.

Hence we see that although boughs may, and must be represented as actually tapering, they must only be so when they are sending off foliage and sprays, and when they are at such a distance that the particular forks and divisions cannot be evident to the eye ; and farther, even in such circumstances the tapering never can be sudden or rapid. No bough ever, with appearance of smooth tapering, loses more than one tenth of its diameter in a length of ten diameters. Any greater diminution than this must be accounted for by visible ramification, and must take place by steps, at each fork.

§ 5. The degree of tapering which may be represented as continuous.

And therefore we see at once that the stem of Gaspar Poussin's tall tree, on the right of the La Riccia, in the National Gallery, is a painting of a carrot or a parsnip, not of the trunk of a tree. For, being so near that every individual leaf is visible, we should not have seen, in nature, one branch or stem actually tapering. We should have received an *impression* of graceful diminution ; but we should have been able, on examination, to trace it joint by joint, fork by fork, into the thousand minor supports of the leaves. Gaspar Poussin's stem, on the contrary, only sends off four or five minor branches altogether, and both it and they taper violently, and without showing why or wherefore—without parting with a single twig—without showing one vestige of roughness or excrescence—and leaving, therefore, their unfortunate leaves to hold on as best they may. The latter, however, are clever

§ 6. The trees of Gaspar Poussin ;

leaves, and support themselves as swarming bees do, hanging on by each other.

But even this piece of work is a jest to the perpetration of the bough at the left-hand upper corner of the picture opposite to it,—the View near Albano. This latter is a representation of an ornamental group of elephants' tusks, with feathers tied to the ends of them. Not the wildest imagination could ever conjure up in it the remotest resemblance to the bough of a tree. It might be the claws of a witch—the talons of an eagle—the horns of a fiend; but it is a full assemblage of every conceivable falsehood which can be told respecting foliage—a piece of work so barbarous in every way, that one glance at it ought to prove the complete charlatanism and trickery of the whole system of the old landscape painters. For I will depart for once from my usual plan, of abstaining from all assertion of a thing's being beautiful or otherwise; I will say here, at once, that such drawing as this is as ugly as it is childish, and as painful as it is false; and that the man who could tolerate, much more, who could deliberately set down such a thing on his canvas, had neither eye nor feeling for one single attribute or excellence of God's works. He might have drawn the other stem in excusable ignorance, or under some false impression of being able to improve upon nature; but *this* is conclusive and unpardonable. Again, take the stem of the chief tree in Claude's Narcissus. It is a very faithful portrait of a large boa-constrictor, with a handsome tail; the kind of trunk which young ladies at fashionable boarding-schools represent with nosegays at the top of them, by way of forest scenery.

Let us refresh ourselves for a moment, by looking at the truth. We need not go to Turner, we will go to the man who, next to him, is unquestionably the greatest master of foliage in

Europe—J. D. Harding. Take the trunk of the largest stone-pine, Plate 25, in the Park and the

§ 8. The truth, as it is given by J. D. Harding.

Forest. For the first nine or ten feet from the ground it does not lose one hairbreadth of its diameter. But the shoot, broken off just under the crossing part of the distant tree, is followed by an instant diminution of the trunk, perfectly appreciable both by the eye and the compasses. Again, the stem maintains undiminished thickness, up to the two shoots on the

left, from the loss of which it suffers again perceptibly. On the right, immediately above, is the stump of a very large bough, whose loss reduces the trunk suddenly to about two-thirds of what it was at the root. Diminished again, less considerably, by the minor branch close to this stump, it now retains its diameter up to the three branches, broken off just under the head, where it once more loses in diameter, and finally branches into the multitude of head-boughs, of which not one will be found tapering in any part, but losing themselves gradually by division among their offshoots and spray. This is nature, and beauty too.

But the old masters are not satisfied with drawing carrots for boughs. Nature can be violated in more ways than one, and the industry with which they seek out and adopt every conceivable mode of contradicting her is matter of no small interest. It is evident, from what we have above stated of the structure of all trees, that as no boughs diminish where they do not fork, so they cannot fork without diminishing. It is impossible

§ 9. Boughs, in consequence of this law, must diminish where they divide. Those of the old masters often do not.

that the smallest shoot can be sent out of a bough without a diminution of the diameter above it; and wherever a branch goes off it must not only be less in diameter than the bough from which it springs, but the bough beyond the fork must be less by precisely the quantity of the branch it has sent off.* Now observe the bough underneath the first bend of the great stem in Claude's Narcissus; it sends off four branches like the ribs of a leaf. The two lowest of these are both quite as thick as the parent stem, and the stem itself is much thicker after it has sent off the first one than it was before. The top boughs of the central tree, in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, ramify in the same scientific way.

* It sometimes happens that a morbid direction of growth will cause an exception here and there to this rule, the bough swelling beyond its legitimate size; knots and excrescences, of course, sometimes interfere with the effect of diminution. I believe that in the laurel, when it grows large and old, singular instances may be found of thick upper boughs and over quantity of wood at the extremities. All these accidents or exceptions are felt as such by the eye. They may occasionally be used by the painter in savage or grotesque scenery, or as points of contrast, but are no excuse for his ever losing sight of the general law.

But there are further conclusions to be drawn from this great principle in trees. As they only diminish where they divide, their increase of number is in precise proportion to their diminution of size, so that whenever we come to the extremities of boughs, we must have a multitude of sprays sufficient to make up, if they were united, the bulk of that from which they spring. Where a bough divides into two equal ramifications, the diameter of each of the two is about two-thirds that of the single one, and the sum of their diameters, therefore, one-fourth greater than the diameter of the single one. Hence, if no boughs died or were lost, the quantity of wood in the sprays would appear one-fourth greater than would be necessary to make up the thickness of the trunk. But the lost boughs remove the excess, and therefore, speaking broadly, the diameters of the outer boughs put together would generally just make up the diameter of the trunk. Precision in representing this is neither desirable nor possible. All that is required is just so much observance of the general principle as may make the eye feel satisfied that there is something like the same quantity of wood in the sprays which there is in the stem. But to do this, there must be, what there always is in nature, an exceeding complexity of the outer sprays. This complexity gradually increases towards their extremities, of course exactly in proportion to the slenderness of the twigs. The slenderer they become, the more there are of them, until at last, at the extremities of the tree, they form a mass of intricacy, which in winter, when it can be seen, is scarcely distinguishable from fine herbage, and is beyond all power of definite representation; it can only be expressed by a mass of involved strokes. Also, as they shoot out in every direction, some are nearer, some more distant; some distinct, some faint; and their intersections and relations of distance are marked with the most exquisite gradations of aerial perspective. Now it will be found universally in the works of Claude, Gaspar, and Salvator, that the boughs do *not* get in the least complex or multiplied towards the extremities—that each large limb forks only into two or three smaller ones, each of which vanishes into the air without any cause or reason for such unaccountable conduct—unless that the mass of leaves transixed upon it or tied to it, entirely dependent

§ 10. Boughs must multiply as they diminish. Those of the old masters do not.

on its single strength, have been too much, as well they may be, for its powers of solitary endurance. This total ignorance of tree structure is shown throughout their works. The Sinon before Priam is an instance of it in a really fine work of Claude's, but the most gross examples are in the works of Salvator. It appears that this latter artist was hardly in the habit of studying from nature at all after his boyish ramble among the Calabrian hills; and I do not recollect any instance of a piece of his bough-drawing which is not palpably and demonstrably a made-up phantasm of the studio, the proof derivable from this illegitimate tapering being one of the most convincing. The painter is always visibly embarrassed to reduce the thick boughs to spray, and *feeling* (for Salvator naturally had acute feeling for truth) that the bough was wrong when it tapered suddenly, he accomplishes its diminution by an impossible protraction; throwing out shoot after shoot until his branches straggle all across the picture, and at last disappear unwillingly where there is no room for them to stretch any farther. The consequence is, that whatever leaves are put upon such boughs have evidently no adequate support, their power of leverage is enough to uproot the tree; or if the boughs are left bare, they have the look of the long tentacula of some complicated marine monster, or of the waving endless threads of bunchy sea-weed, instead of the firm, upholding, braced, and bending grace of natural boughs. I grant that this is in a measure done by Salvator from a love of ghastliness, and that in certain scenes it is in a sort allowable; but it is in a far greater degree done from pure ignorance of tree structure, as is sufficiently proved by the landscape of the Pitti palace, Peace burning the arms of War; where the spirit of the scene is intended to be quite other than ghastly, and yet the tree branches show the usual errors in an extraordinary degree; every one of their arrangements is impossible, and the trunk of the tree could not for a moment support the foliage it is loaded with. So also in the pictures of the Guadagni palace. And even where the skeleton look of branches is justifiable or desirable, there is no occasion for any violation of natural laws. I have seen more spectral character in the real limbs of a blasted oak, than ever in Salvator's best monstrosities; more horror is to be obtained by right combina-

§ 11. Bough-drawing of Salvator.

tion of inventive line, than by drawing tree branches as if they were wing-bones of a pterodactyle. All departure from natural forms to give fearfulness is mere Germanism ; it is the work of fancy, not of imagination,* and instantly degrades whatever it affects to third-rate level. There is nothing more marked in truly great men, than their power of being dreadful without being false or licentious. In Tintoret's *Murder of Abel*, the head of the sacrificed firstling lies in the corner of the foreground, obscurely sketched in, and with the light gleaming upon its glazed eyes. There is nothing exaggerated about the head, but there is more horror got out of it, and more of death suggested by its treatment, than if he had turned all the trees of his picture into skeletons, and raised a host of demons to drive the club.

It is curious that in Salvator's sketches or etchings there is less that is wrong than in his paintings,—there seems a fresher remembrance of nature about them. Not so with Claude. It is

only by looking over his sketches, in the British Museum, that a complete and just idea is to be formed of his capacities of error ; for the feeling and arrangement of many of them are those of an

advanced age, so that we can scarcely set them down for what they resemble—the work of a boy ten years old ; and the drawing being seen without any aids of tone or color to set it off, shows in its naked falsehood. The windy landscape of Poussin, opposite the *Dido and Æneas*, in the National Gallery, presents us, in the foreground tree, with a piece of atrocity which I think, to any person who candidly considers it, may save me all farther trouble of demonstrating the errors of ancient art. I do not in the least suspect the picture : the tones of it, and much of the handling, are masterly ; yet that foreground tree comprises every conceivable violation of truth which the human hand can commit, or head invent, in drawing a tree—except only, that it is not drawn root uppermost. It has no bark, no roughness nor character of stem ; its boughs do not grow out of each other, but are stuck into each other ; they ramify without diminishing, diminish without ramifying, are terminated by no

§ 12. All these errors especially shown in Claude's sketches, and concentrated in a work of G. Poussin's.

* Compare Part III. Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 6, 7.

complicated sprays, have their leaves tied to their ends, like the heads of Dutch brooms; and finally, and chiefly, they are evidently not made of wood, but of some soft elastic substance, which the wind can stretch out as it pleases, for there is not a vestige of an angle in any one of them. Now, the fiercest wind

that ever blew upon the earth, could not take the
§ 13. Impossibility of the angles of boughs being taken out of them by wind.

The whole bough bends together, retaining its elbows, and angles, and natural form, but affected throughout with curvature in each of its parts and joints. That part of it which was before perpendicular being bent aside, and that which was before sloping, being bent into still greater inclination, the angle at which the two parts meet remains the same; or if the strain be put in the opposite direction, the bough will break long before it loses its angle. You will find it difficult to bend the angles out of the youngest sapling, if they be marked; and absolutely impossible, with a strong bough. You may break it, but you will not destroy its angles. And if you watch a tree in the wildest storm, you will find that though all its boughs are bending, none lose their character but the utmost shoots and sapling spray. Hence Gaspar Poussin, by his bad drawing, does not make his storm strong, but his tree weak; he does not make his gust violent, but his boughs of India-rubber.

These laws respecting vegetation are so far more imperative than those which were stated respecting water, that the greatest artist cannot violate them without danger, because they are laws

resulting from organic structure, which it is always
§ 14. Bough-drawing of Titian.

painful to see interrupted; on the other hand, they have this in common with all laws, that they may be observed with mathematical precision, yet with no grateful result; the disciplined eye and the life in the woods are worth more than all botanical knowledge. For there is that about the growing of the tree trunk, and that grace in its upper ramification which cannot be taught, and which cannot even be seen but by eager watchfulness. There is not an Exhibition passes, but there appear in it hundreds of elaborate paintings of trees, many of them executed from nature. For three hundred years back, trees have been drawn with affection by all the civilized nations of Europe, and yet I repeat boldly, what I before

asserted, that no men but Titian and Turner ever drew the stem of a tree.

Generally, I think, the perception of the muscular qualities of the tree trunk incomplete, except in men who have studied the human figure, and in loose expression of those characters, the painter who can draw the living muscle seldom fails ; but the thoroughly peculiar lines belonging to woody fibre, can only be learned by patient forest study ; and hence in all the trees of the merely historical painters, there is fault of some kind or another, commonly exaggeration of the muscular swellings, or insipidity and want of spring in curvature, or fantasticism and unnaturalness of arrangement, and especially a want of the peculiar characters of bark which express the growth and age of the tree ; for bark is no mere excrescence, lifeless and external—it is a skin of especial significance in its indications of the organic form beneath ; in places under the arms of the tree it wrinkles up and forms fine lines *round* the trunk, inestimable in their indication of the direction of its surface ; in others, it bursts or peels longitudinally, and the rending and bursting of it are influenced in direction and degree by the under-growth and swelling of the woody fibre, and are not a mere roughness and granulated pattern of the hide. Where there are so many points to be observed, some are almost always exaggerated, and others missed, according to the predilections of the painter. Rembrandt and Albert Durer have given some splendid examples of woody texture, but both miss the grace of the great lines. Titian took a larger view and reached a higher truth, yet (as before noticed) from the habit of drawing the figure, he admits too much flaccidity and bend, and sometimes makes his tree trunks look flexible like sea-weed. There is a peculiar stiffness and spring about the curves of the wood, which separates them completely from animal curves, and which especially defies recollection or invention ; it is so subtle that it escapes but too often, even in the most patient study from nature ; it lies within the thickness of a pencil line. Farther, the modes of ramification of the upper branches are so varied, inventive, and graceful, that the least alteration of them, even in the measure of a hair-breadth, spoils them ; and though it is sometimes possible to get rid of a troublesome bough, accidentally awkward, or in

some minor respects to assist the arrangement, yet so far as the real branches are copied, the hand libels their lovely curvatures even in its best attempts to follow them.

These two characters, the woody stiffness hinted through muscular line, and the inventive grace of the upper boughs, have never been rendered except by Turner; he does not merely draw them better than others, but he is the only man who has ever drawn them at all. Of the woody character, the tree subjects of the *Liber Studiorum* afford marked examples; the *Cephalus* and *Procris*, scenes near the *Grand Chartreuse* and *Blair Athol*, *Juvenile Tricks*, and *Hedging and Ditching*, may be particularized; in the *England* series, the *Bolton Abbey* is perhaps a more characteristic and thoroughly *Turneresque* example than any.

Of the arrangement of the upper boughs, the *Æsacus* and *Hesperie* is perhaps the most consummate example, the absolute truth and simplicity and freedom from anything like fantasticism or animal form being as marked on the one hand, as the exquisite imaginativeness of the lines on the other: among the *Yorkshire* subjects the *Aske Hall*, *Kirby Lonsdale Churchyard*, and *Brignall Church* are most characteristic: among the *England* subjects the *Warwick*, *Dartmouth Cove*, *Durham*, and *Chain Bridge over the Tees*, where the piece of thicket on the right has been well rendered by the engraver, and is peculiarly expressive of the aerial relations and play of light among complex boughs. The vignette at the opening of *Rogers's Pleasures of Memory*, that of *Chiefswood Cottage* in the *Illustrations to Scott's Works*, and the *Chateau de la belle Gabrielle*, engraved for the *Keepsake*, are among the most graceful examples accessible to every one; the *Crossing the Brook* will occur at once to those acquainted with the artist's gallery. The drawing of the stems in all these instances, and indeed in all the various and frequent minor occurrences of such subject throughout the painter's works is entirely unique, there is nothing of the same kind in art.

Let us, however, pass to the leafage of the elder landscape painters, and see if it atones for the deficiencies of the stems. One of the most remarkable characters of natural leafage is the constancy with which,

§ 15. Bough-drawing of Turner.

§ 16. Leafage. Its variety and symmetry.

while the leaves are arranged on the spray with exquisite regularity, that regularity is modified in their actual effect. For as in every group of leaves some are seen sideways, forming merely long lines, some foreshortened, some crossing each other, every one differently turned and placed from all the others, the forms of the leaves, though in themselves similar, give rise to a thousand strange and differing forms in the group; and the shadows of some, passing over the others, still farther disguise and confuse the mass, until the eye can distinguish nothing but a graceful and flexible disorder of innumerable forms, with here and there a perfect leaf on the extremity, or a symmetrical association of one or two, just enough to mark the specific character and to give unity and grace, but never enough to repeat in one group what was done in another—never enough to prevent the eye from feeling that, however regular and mathematical may be the structure of parts, what is composed out of them is as various and infinite as any other part of nature. Nor does this take place in general effect only. Break off an elm bough, three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf. It is ten to one if in the whole bough, (provided you do not twist it about as you work,) you find one form of a leaf exactly like another; perhaps you will not even have *one* complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it; and though the whole bough will look graceful and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of

it like another. Now go to Gaspar Poussin, and take one of his sprays where they come against the sky; you may count it all round, one, two, three, four, one bunch; five, six, seven, eight, two bunches; nine, ten, eleven, twelve, three bunches; with four leaves each,—and such leaves! every one precisely the same as its neighbor, blunt and round at the end, (where every forest leaf is sharp, except that of the fig-tree,) tied together by the roots, and so fastened on to the demoniacal claws above described, one bunch to each claw.

But if nature is so various when you have a bough on the table before you, what must she be when she retires from you, and gives you her whole mass and multitude? The leaves then

§ 17. Perfect regularity of Poussin.

at the extremities become as fine as dust, a mere confusion of points and lines between you and the sky, a confusion which you might as well hope to draw sea-sand particle by particle, as to imitate leaf for leaf. This, as it comes down into the body of the tree, gets closer, but never opaque ; it is always transparent, with crumbling lights in it letting you through to the sky ; then, out of this, come, heavier and heavier, the masses of illumined foliage, all dazzling and inextricable, save here and there a single leaf on the extremities ; then, under these, you get deep passages of broken, irregular gloom, passing into transparent, green-lighted, misty hollows ; the twisted stems glancing through them in their pale and entangled infinity, and the shafted sunbeams, rained from above, running along the lustrous leaves for an instant ; then lost, then caught again on some emerald bank or knotted root, to be sent up again with a faint reflex on the white under-sides of dim groups of drooping foliage, the shadows of the upper boughs running in gray network down the glossy stems, and resting in quiet checkers upon the glittering earth ; but all penetrable and transparent, and, in proportion, inextricable and incomprehensible, except where across the labyrinth and the mystery of the dazzling light and dream-like shadow, falls, close to us, some solitary spray, some wreath of two or three motionless large leaves, the type and embodying of all that in the rest we feel and imagine, but can never see.

Now, with thus much of nature in your mind, go to Gaspar Poussin's View near Albano, in the National Gallery. It is the very subject to unite all these effects,—a sloping bank shaded with intertwined forest ;—and what has Gaspar given us ? A mass of smooth, opaque, varnished brown, without one interstice, one change of hue, or any vestige of leafy structure in its interior, or in those parts of it, I should say, which are intended to represent interior ; but out of it, over it rather, at regular intervals, we have circular groups of greenish touches, always the same in size, shape, and distance from each other, containing so exactly the same number of touches each, that you cannot tell one from another. There are eight or nine and thirty of them, laid over each other like fish-scales ; the shade being most carefully made darker and

§ 18. Exceeding intricacy of nature's foliage.

§ 19. How contradicted by the tree-patterns of G. Poussin.

darker as it recedes from each until it comes to the edge of the next, against which it cuts in the same sharp circular line, and then begins to decline again, until the canvas is covered, with about as much intelligence or feeling of art as a house-painter has in marbling a wainscot, or a weaver in repeating an ornamental pattern. What is there in this, which the most determined prejudice in favor of the old masters can for a moment suppose to resemble trees? It is exactly what the most ignorant beginner, trying to make a complete drawing, would lay down,—exactly the conception of trees which we have in the works of our worst drawing-masters, where the shade is laid on with the black-lead and stump, and every human power exerted to make it look like a kitchen-grate well polished.

Oppose to this the drawing even of our somewhat inferior tree-painters. I will not insult Harding by mentioning his work after it, but take Creswick, for instance, and match one of his spark-

ling bits of green leafage with this tree-pattern of Poussin's. I do not say there is not a dignity and

impressiveness about the old landscape, owing to its simplicity ; and I am very far from calling Creswick's good tree-painting ; it is false in color and deficient in mass and freedom, and has many other defects, but it is the work of a man who has sought earnestly for truth ; and who, with one thought or memory of nature in his heart, could look at the two landscapes, and receive Poussin's with ordinary patience? Take Creswick in black and white, where he is unembarrassed by his fondness for pea-green, the illustrations, for instance, to the Nut-brown Maid, in the Book of English Ballads. Look at the intricacy and fulness of the dark oak foliage where it bends over the brook, see how you can go through it, and into it, and come out behind it to the quiet bit of sky. Observe the gray, aerial transparency of the stunted copse on the left, and the entangling of the boughs where the light near foliage detaches itself. Above all, note the forms of the masses of light. Not things like scales or shells, sharp at the edge and flat in the middle, but irregular and rounded, stealing in and out accidentally from the shadow, and presenting, as the masses of all trees do, in general outline, a resemblance to the specific forms of the leaves of which they are composed. Turn over the page, and look into

§ 30. How followed by Creswick.

the weaving of the foliage and sprays against the dark night-sky, how near they are, yet how untraceable ; see how the moonlight creeps up underneath them, trembling and shivering on the silver boughs above ; note also, the descending bit of ivy on the left, of which only two leaves are made out, and the rest is confusion, or tells only in the moonlight like faint flakes of snow.

But nature observes another principle in her foliage more important even than its intricacy. She always secures an exceeding harmony and repose. She is *so* intricate that her minuteness of parts becomes to the eye, at a little distance, one united veil or cloud of leaves, to destroy the evenness of which is perhaps a greater fault than to destroy its transparency. Look at Creswick's oak again, in its dark parts. Intricate as it is, all is blended into a cloud-like harmony of shade, which becomes fainter and fainter, as it retires, with the most delicate flatness and unity of tone. And it is by this kind of vaporescence, so to speak, by this flat, misty, unison of parts, that nature, and her faithful followers, are enabled to keep the eye in perfect repose in the midst of profusion, and to display beauty of form, wherever they choose, to the greatest possible advantage, by throwing it across some quiet, visionary passage of dimness and rest.

It is here that Hobbima and Both fail. They can paint oak leafage faithfully, but do not know where to stop, and by doing too much, lose the truth of all,—lose the very truth of detail at which they aim, for all their minute work only gives two leaves to nature's twenty. They are evidently incapable of even thinking of a tree, much more of drawing it, except leaf by leaf ; they have no notion nor sense of simplicity, mass, or obscurity, and when they come to distance, where it is totally impossible that leaves should be separately seen, yet, being incapable of conceiving or rendering the grand and quiet forms of truth, they are reduced to paint their bushes with dots and touches expressive of leaves three feet broad each. Nevertheless there is a genuine aim in their works, and their failure is rather to be attributed to ignorance of art.

§ 21. Perfect unity in nature's foliage.

§ 22. Total want of it in Both and Hobbima.

than to such want of sense for nature as we find in Claude or Poussin ; and when they come close home, we sometimes receive from them fine passages of mechanical truth.

But let us oppose to their works the group of trees on the left in Turner's Marly.* We have there perfect and ceaseless intricacy to oppose to Poussin,—perfect and unbroken repose to oppose to Hobbima ; and in the unity of these the perfection of truth. This group may be taken as a fair standard of Turner's tree-painting. We have in it the admirably drawn stems, instead of the claws or the serpents ; full, transparent, boundless intricacy, instead of the shell pattern ; and misty depth of intermingled light and leafage, instead of perpetual repetition of one mechanical touch.

I have already spoken (Section II. Chapter IV. § 15,) of the way in which mystery and intricacy are carried even into the nearest leaves of the foreground, and noticed the want of such intricacy even in the best works of the old masters.

§ 23. How rendered by Turner. Claude's are particularly deficient, for by representing every particular leaf of them, or trying to do so, he makes nature finite, and even his nearest bits of leafage are utterly false, for they have neither shadows modifying their form, (compare Section II. Chapter III. § 7,) nor sparkling lights, nor confused intersections of their own forms and lines ; and the perpetual repetition of the same shape of leaves and the same arrangement, relieved from a black ground, is more like an ornamental pattern for dress than the painting of a foreground. Nevertheless, the foliage of Claude, in his middle distances, is the finest and truest part of his pictures, and, on the whole, affords the best example of good drawing to be found in ancient art. It is always false in color, and has not boughs enough amongst it, and the stems commonly look a great deal nearer than any part of it, but it is still graceful, flexible, abundant, intricate ; and, in all but color and connection with stems, very nearly right. Of the perfect painting of thick,

* This group I have before noticed as singularly (but, I doubt not, accidentally, and in consequence of the love of the two great painters for the same grand forms) resembling that introduced by Tintoret in the background of his Cain and Abel.

leafy foreground, Turner's Mercury and Argus, and Oakhampton, are the standards.*

The last and most important truth to be observed respecting trees, is that their boughs always, in finely grown individuals, bear among themselves such a ratio of length as to describe with their extremities a symmetrical curve, constant for each species; and within this curve all the irregularities, segments, and divisions of the tree are included, each bough reaching the limit with its extremity, but not passing it. When a tree is perfectly grown, each bough starts from the trunk with just so much wood as, allowing for constant ramification, will enable it to reach the terminal line; or if by mistake, it start with too little, it will proceed without ramifying till within a distance where it may safely divide; if on the contrary it start with too much, it will ramify quickly and constantly; or, to express the real operation more accurately, each bough, growing on so as to keep even with its neighbors, takes so much wood from the trunk as is sufficient to enable it to do so, more or less in proportion as it ramifies fast

§ 25. Universal termination of trees in symmetrical curves.

* The above paragraphs I have left as originally written, because they are quite true as far as they reach; but like many other portions of this essay, they take in a very small portion of the truth. I shall not add to them at present, because I can explain my meaning better in our consideration of the laws of beauty; but the reader must bear in mind that what is above stated refers, throughout, to large masses of foliage seen under broad sunshine,—and it has especial reference to Turner's enormous scale of scene, and intense desire of light. In twilight, when tree-forms are seen against sky, other laws come into operation, as well as in subject of narrow limits and near foreground. It is, I think, to be regretted that Turner does not in his Academy pictures sometimes take more confined and gloomy subjects, like that grand one, near the Chartreuse, of the Liber Studiorum, wherein his magnificent power of elaborating close foliage might be developed; but, for the present, let the reader, with respect to what has been here said of close foliage, note the drawing of the leaves in that plate, in the *Æsacus* and *Hesperie*, and the *Cephalus*, and the elaboration of the foregrounds in the Yorkshire drawings; let him compare what is said of Turner's foliage painting above in Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII. § 40, § 41. and of Titian's previously, as well as Part III. Sect. I. Chap. VIII., and Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 21. I shall hereafter endeavor to arrange the subject in a more systematic manner; but what additional observations I may have to make will none of them be in any wise more favorable to Gaspar, Salvator, or Hobbima, than the above paragraphs.

or slowly. In badly grown trees, the boughs are apt to fall short of the curve, or at least, there are so many jags and openings that its symmetry is interrupted; and in young trees, the impatience of the upper shoots frequently breaks the line; but in perfect and mature trees, every bough does its duty completely, and the line of curve is quite filled up, and the mass within it unbroken, so that the tree assumes the shape of a dome, as in the oak, or, in tall trees, of a pear, with the stalk downmost. The old masters paid no attention whatsoever to this great principle. They swing their boughs about, anywhere and everywhere; each stops or goes on just as it likes, nor will it be possible, in any of their works, to find a single example in which any symmetrical curve is indicated by the extremities.*

§ 26. Altogether unobserved by the old masters. Always given by Turner.

But I need scarcely tell any one in the slightest degree acquainted with the works of Turner, how rigidly and constantly he adheres to this principle of nature; taking in his highest compositions the perfect ideal form, every spray being graceful and varied in itself, but inevitably terminating at the assigned limit, and filling up the curve without break or gap; in his lower works, taking less perfect form, but invariably hinting the constant tendency in all, and thus, in spite of his abundant complexity, he arranges his trees under simpler and grander forms than any other artist, even among the moderns.

It was above asserted that J. D. Harding is, after Turner, the greatest master of foliage in Europe; I ought, however, to state that my knowledge of the modern landscape of Germany is very limited, and that, even with respect to France and Italy, I judge rather from the general tendency of study and character of mind visible in the annual

§ 27. Foliage painting on the Continent.

* Perhaps in some instances, this may be the case with the trees of Nicholas Poussin; but even with him the boughs only touch the line of limit with their central *points* of extremity, and are not *sectors* of the great curve—forming a part of it with expanded extremities, as in nature. Draw a few straight lines, from the centre to the circumference of a circle. The forms included between them are the forms of the individual boughs of a fine tree, with all their ramifications (only the external curve is not a circle, but more frequently two parabolas—which, I believe, it is in the oak—or an ellipse) But each bough of the old masters is club-shaped, and broadest, not at the outside of the tree, but a little way towards its centre.

Exhibition of the Louvre, and in some galleries of modern paintings at Milan, Venice, and Florence, than from any detailed acquaintance with the works of their celebrated painters. Yet I think I can hardly be mistaken. I have seen nothing to induce me to take a closer survey; no life knowledge or emotion in any quarter; nothing but the meanest and most ignorant copyism of vulgar details, coupled with a style of conception resembling that of the various lithographic ideals on the first leaves of the music of pastoral ballads. An exception ought, however, to be made in favor of French etching; some studies in black and white may be seen in the narrow passages of the Louvre of very high merit, showing great skill and delicacy of execution, and most determined industry; (in fact, I think when the French artist fails, it is never through fear of labor;) nay, more than this, some of them exhibit acute perception of landscape character and great power of reaching simple impressions of gloom, wildness, sound, and motion. Some of their illustrated works also exhibit these powers in a high degree; there is a spirit, fire, and sense of reality about some of the wood-cuts to the large edition of Paul and Virginia, and a determined rendering of separate feeling in each, such as we look for in vain in our own ornamental works.* But the French appear to have no teaching such as might carry them beyond this; their entire ignorance of color renders the assumption of the brush instantly fatal, and the false, forced, and impious sentiment of the nation renders anything like grand composition altogether impossible.

It is therefore only among good artists of our own school that I think any fair comparison can be instituted, and I wish to assert Harding's knowledge of foliage more distinctly, because he neither does justice to himself, nor is,

§ 28. Foliage of
J. D. Harding.
Its deficiencies.

I think, rightly estimated by his fellow-artists. I shall not make any invidious remarks respecting individuals, but I think it necessary to state generally, that the style of foliage painting chiefly characteristic of the pictures on the line of the Royal Academy is of the most degraded kind; †

* On the other hand, nothing can be more exquisitely ridiculous than the French illustrations of a second or third-rate order, as those to the *Harmonies* of Lamartine.

† Of Stanfield's foliage I remember too little to enable me to form any

and that, except Turner and Mulready, we have, as far as I know, no Royal Academician capable of painting even the smallest portion of foliage in a dignified or correct manner ; all is lost in green shadows with glittering yellow lights, white trunks with black patches on them, and leaves of no species in particular. Much laborious and clever foliage drawing is to be found in the rooms of the New Water-Color Society ; but we have no one in any wise comparable to Harding for thorough knowledge of the subject, for power of expression in a sketch from nature, or for natural and unaffected conception in the study.

Maintaining for him this high position, it is necessary that I should also state those deficiencies which appear to me to conceal his real power, and in no small degree to prevent his progress.

His over-fondness for brilliant execution I have already noticed. He is fonder of seeing something tolerably like a tree produced with few touches, than something very like a tree produced with many. Now, it is quite allowable that

§ 29. His brilliancy of execution too manifest.

occasionally, and in portions of his picture, a great artist should indulge himself in this luxury of sketching, yet it is a perilous luxury ; it blunts the feeling and weakens the hand. I have said enough in various places respecting the virtues of negligence and of finish, (compare above the chapter on Ideas of Power in Part I. Sect. II., and Part III. Sect. I. Ch. X. § 4.) and I need only say here, therefore, that Harding's foliage is never sufficiently finished, and has at its best the look of a rapid sketch from nature touched upon at home. In 1843, (I think,) there was a pretty drawing in the rooms of the Water-Color Society,—the clear green water of a torrent resting among stones, with copse-like wood on each side, a bridge in the distance, a white flower (water-lily?) catching the eye in front ; the tops of the trees on the left of this picture were mere broad blots of color dashed upon the sky and connected by stems. I allow the power necessary to attain any look of foliage by such means, but it is power abused : by no such means can any of the higher virtue and impressiveness of foliage be rendered. In the use of body color for near leaves, his execution is defective ; it is a pity that he so much neglects this noble element of landscape.

cution is also too hasty ; often the touches are mere square or round dots, which can be understood only for foliage by their arrangement. This fault was especially marked in the trees of his picture painted for the Academy two years ago ; they were very nearly shapeless, and could not stand even in courtesy for walnut leaves, for which, judging by the make of the tree, they must have been intended.

His drawing of boughs is, in all points of demonstrable law, right, and very frequently easy and graceful also ; yet it has two eminent faults, the first, that the flow of the bough is sacrificed to its texture, the pencil checking itself and hesitating at dots, and stripes, and knots, instead of following the grand and unbroken tendency of growth : the second, that however good the arrangement may be as far as regards merely flexibility, intricacy, and freedom, there are none of those composed groups of line which are unfailing in nature. Harding's work is not grand enough to be natural. The drawings in the park and the forest, are, I believe, almost facsimiles of sketches made from nature ; yet it is evident at once that in all of them nothing but the general lie and disposition of the boughs has been taken from the tree, and that no single branch or spray has been faithfully copied or patiently studied.

This want of close study necessarily causes several deficiencies of feeling respecting general form. Harding's choice is always of tree forms comparatively imperfect, leaning this way and that, and unequal in the lateral arrangements of foliage. Such forms are often graceful, always picturesque, but rarely grand ; and when systematically adopted, untrue. It requires more patient study to attain just feeling of the dignity and character of a purely formed tree with all its symmetries perfect.

One more cause of incorrectness I may note, though it is not peculiar to the artist's tree-drawing, but attaches to his general system of sketching. In Harding's valuable work on the use of the Lead Pencil, there is one principle advanced which I believe to be false and dangerous, that the local color of objects is not thereby to be rendered. I think the instance given is that of some baskets, whose darkness is occasioned solely by the

§ 30. His bough-drawing and choice of form.

§ 31. Local color, how far expressible in black and white, and with what advantage.

touches indicating the wicker-work. Now, I believe, that an essential difference between the sketch of a great and of a comparatively inferior master is, that the former is conceived entirely in shade and color, and its masses are blocked out with reference to both, while the inferior draughtsman checks at textures and petty characters of object. If Rembrandt had had to sketch such baskets, he would have troubled himself very little about the wicker-work ; but he would have looked to see where they came dark or light on the sand, and where there were any sparkling points of light on the wet osiers. These darks and lights he would have scratched in with the fastest lines he could, leaving no white paper but at the wet points of lustre ; if he had had time, the wicker-work would have come afterwards.* And I think, that the first thing to be taught to any pupil, is neither how to manage the pencil, nor how to attain character of outline, but rather to see where things are light and where they are dark, and to draw them as he sees them, never caring whether his lines be dexterous or slovenly. The result of such study is the immediate substitution of downright drawing for symbolism, and afterwards a judicious moderation in the use of extreme lights and darks ; for where local colors are really drawn, so much of what seems violently dark is found to come light against something else, and so much of what seems high light to come dark against the sky, that the draughtsman trembles at finding himself plunged either into blackness or whiteness, and seeks, as he should, for means of obtaining force without either.

It is in consequence of his evident habit of sketching more with a view to detail and character than to the great masses, that Harding's chiaroscuro is frequently crude, scattered, and petty. Black shadows occur under his distant trees, white high lights on his foreground rocks, the foliage and trunks are divided by violent oppositions into separate masses, and the branches

* It is true that many of Rembrandt's etchings are merely in line, but it may be observed that the subject is universally *conceived* in light and shade, and that the lines are either merely guides in the arrangement, or an exquisite indication of the key-notes of shade, on which the after-system of it is to be based—portions of fragmentary finish, showing the completeness of the conception.

lose in spots of moss and furrowings of bark their soft roundings of delicate form, and their grand relations to each other and the sky.

It is owing to my respect for the artist, and my belief in his power and conscientious desire to do what is best, that I have thus extended these somewhat unkind remarks. On the other

§ 32. Opposition
between great
manner and great
knowledge.

hand, it is to be remembered, that his knowledge of nature is most extended, and his dexterity of drawing most instructive, especially considering his range of subject; for whether in water, rock, or foliage, he is equally skilful in attaining whatever he desires, (though he does not always desire all that he ought;) and artists should keep in mind, that neither grandeur of manner nor truth of system can atone for the want of this knowledge and this skill. Constable's manner is good and great, but being unable to draw even a log of wood, much more a trunk of a tree or a stone, he left his works destitute of substance, mere studies of effect without any expression of specific knowledge; and thus even what is great in them has been productive, I believe, of very great injury in its encouragement of the most superficial qualities of the English school.

The foliage of David Cox has been already noticed (preface to second edition.) It is altogether exquisite in color, and in its impressions of coolness, shade, and mass; of its drawing I can

§ 33. Foliage of
Cox, Fielding,
and Cattermole.

not say anything, but that I should be sorry to see it better. Copley Fielding's is remarkable for its intricacy and elegance; it is, however, not free from affectation, and, as has been before remarked, is always evidently composed in the study. The execution is too rough and woolly; it is wanting in simplicity, sharpness, and freshness,—above all in specific character: not, however, in his middle distances, where the rounded masses of forest and detached blasted trunks of fir are usually very admirable. Cattermole has very grand conceptions of general form, but wild and without substance, and therefore incapable of long maintaining their attractiveness, especially lately, the execution having become in the last degree coarse and affected. This is bitterly to be regretted, for few of our artists would paint foliage better, if he would paint it from nature, and with reverence.

Hunt, I think, fails, and fails only, in foliage ; fails, as the Daguerreotype does, from over-fidelity ; for foliage will *not* be imitated, it must be reasoned out and suggested ; yet Hunt is

§ 34. Hunt and the only man we have who can paint the real leaf
Creswick. Green, green under sunlight, and, in this respect, his
how to be rendered expressive of light, and offend- trees are delicious,—summer itself. Creswick has
sive if otherwise. sweet feeling, and tries for the real green too,

but, from want of science in his shadows, ends in green paint instead of green light ; in mere local color, instead of color raised by sunshine. One example is enough to show where the fault lies. In his picture of the Weald of Kent, in the British Institution this year, there was a cottage in the middle distance with white walls, and a red roof. The dark sides of the white walls and of the roof were of the same color, a dark purple—wrong for both. Repeated inaccuracies of this kind necessarily deprive even the most brilliant color of all appearance of sunshine, and they are much to be deprecated in Creswick, as he is one of the very few artists who *do* draw from nature and try for nature. Some of his thickets and torrent-beds are most painfully studied, and yet he cannot draw a bough nor a stone. I suspect he is too much in the habit of studying only large views on the spot, and not of drawing small portions thoroughly. I trust it will be seen that these, as all other remarks that I have made throughout this volume on particular works, are not in depreciation of, or unthankfulness for, what the artist has done, but in the desire that he should do himself more justice and more honor. I have much pleasure in Creswick's works, and I am glad always to see them admired by others.

I shall conclude this sketch of the foliage art of England, by mention of two artists, whom I believe to be representative of a considerable class, admirable in their reverence and patience

§ 35. Conclusion. of study, yet unappreciated by the public, because
Works of J. Linnell and S. Palmer. what they do is unrecommended by dexterities of
er. handling. The forest studies of J. Linnell are

peculiarly elaborate, and, in many points, most skilful ; they fail perhaps of interest, owing to over-fulness of detail and a want of generalization in the effect ; but even a little more of the Harding sharpness of touch would set off their sterling qualities, and make them felt. A less known artist, S. Palmer, lately

admitted a member of the Old Water-Color Society, is deserving of the very highest place among faithful followers of nature. His studies of foreign foliage especially are beyond all praise for care and fulness. I have never seen a stone pine or a cypress drawn except by him ; and his feeling is as pure and grand as his fidelity is exemplary. He has not, however, yet, I think, discovered what is necessary and unnecessary in a great picture ; and his works, sent to the Society's rooms, have been most unfavorable examples of his power, and have been generally, as yet, in places where all that is best in them is out of sight. I look to him, nevertheless, unless he lose himself in over-reverence for certain conventionalisms of the elder schools, as one of the probable renovators and correctors of whatever is failing or erroneous in the practice of English art.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL REMARKS RESPECTING THE TRUTH OF TURNER.

WE have now arrived at some general conception of the extent of Turner's knowledge, and the truth of his practice, by the deliberate examination of the characteristics of the four great elements of landscape—sky, earth, water, and vegetation. I have not thought it necessary to devote a chapter to architecture, because enough has been said on this subject in Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII.; and its general truths, which are those with which the landscape painter, as such, is chiefly concerned, require only a simple and straightforward application of those rules of which every other material object of a landscape has required a most difficult and complicated application. Turner's knowledge of perspective probably adds to his power in the arrangement of every order of subject; but ignorance on this head is rather disgraceful than knowledge meritorious. It is disgraceful, for instance, that any man should commit such palpable and atrocious errors in ordinary perspective as are seen in the quay in Claude's sea-piece, No. 14, National Gallery, or in the curved portico of No. 30; but still these are not points to be taken into consideration as having anything to do with artistical rank, just as, though we should say it was disgraceful if a great poet could not spell, we should not consider such a defect as in any way taking from his poetical rank. Neither is there anything particularly belonging to architecture, as such, which it is any credit to an artist to observe or represent; it is only a simple and clear field for the manifestation of his knowledge of general laws. Any surveyor or engineer could have drawn the steps and balustrade in the Hero and Leander, as well as Turner has; but there is no man living but himself who could have thrown the accidental shadows upon them. I may, however, refer for general illus-

§ 1. No necessity of entering into discussion of architectural truth

tration of Turner's power as an architectural draughtsman, to the front of Rouen Cathedral, engraved in the Rivers of France, and to the Ely in the England. I know nothing in art which can be set beside the former of these for overwhelming grandeur and simplicity of effect, and inexhaustible intricacy of parts. I have then only a few remarks farther to offer respecting the general character of all those truths which we have been hitherto endeavoring to explain and illustrate.

The difference in the accuracy of the lines of the Torso of the Vatican, (the Maestro of M. Angelo,) from those in one of M. Angelo's finest works, could perhaps scarcely be appreciated by any eye or feeling undisciplined by the most perfect and practical anatomical knowledge. It rests on points of such traceless and refined delicacy, that though we feel them in the result, we cannot follow them in the details. Yet they are such and so great as to place the Torso alone in art, solitary and supreme; while the finest of M. Angelo's works, considered with respect to truth alone, are said to be only on a level with antiques of the second class, under the Apollo and Venus, that is, two classes or grades below the Torso. But suppose the best sculptor in the world, possessing the most entire appreciation of the excellence of the Torso, were to sit down, pen in hand, to try and tell us wherein the peculiar truth of each line consisted? Could any words that he could use make us feel the hairbreadth of depth and distance on which all depends? or end in anything more than bare assertions of the inferiority of this line to that, which, if we did not perceive for ourselves, no explanation could ever illustrate to us? He might as well endeavor to explain to us by words some taste or other subject of sense, of which we had no experience. And so it is with all truths of the highest order; they are separated from those of average precision by points of extreme delicacy, which none but the cultivated eye can in the least feel, and to express which, all words are absolutely meaningless and useless. Consequently, in all that I have been saying of the truth of artists, I have been able to point out only coarse, broad, and explicable matters; I have been perfectly unable to express (and indeed I have made no endeavor to express) the

§ 2. Extreme difficulty of illustrating or explaining the highest truth.

§ 3. The positive rank of Turner is in no degree shown in the foregoing pages, but only his relative rank.

finely drawn and distinguished truth in which all the real excellence of art consists. All those truths which I have been able to explain and demonstrate in Turner, are such as any artist of ordinary powers of observation ought to be capable of rendering. It is disgraceful to omit them ; but it is no very great credit to observe them. I have indeed proved that they have been neglected, and disgracefully so, by those men who are commonly considered the Fathers of Art ; but in showing that they have been observed by Turner, I have only proved him to be *above* other men in knowledge of truth, I have not given any conception of his own positive rank as a Painter of Nature. But it stands to reason, that the men, who in broad, simple, and demonstrable matters are perpetually violating truth, will not be particularly accurate or careful in carrying out delicate and refined, and undemonstrable matters ; and it stands equally to reason, that the man who, as far as argument or demonstration can go, is found invariably truthful, will, in all probability, be truthful to the last line, and shadow of a line. And such is, indeed, the case with

§ 4. The exceeding refinement of his truth. every touch of this consummate artist ; the essential excellence—all that constitutes the real and exceeding value of his works—is beyond and above expression ; it is a truth inherent in every line, and breathing in every hue, too delicate and exquisite to admit of any kind of proof, nor to be ascertained except by the highest of tests—the keen feeling attained by extended knowledge and long study.

Two lines are laid on canvas ; one is right and another wrong. There is no difference between them appreciable by the compasses—none appreciable by the ordinary eye—none which can be pointed out, if it is not seen. One person feels it,—another does not ; but the feeling or sight of the one can by no words be communicated to the other : it would be unjust if it could, for

§ 5. There is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge. that feeling and sight have been the reward of years of labor. And there is, indeed, nothing in Turner—not one dot nor line—whose meaning can be understood without knowledge ; because he never

aims at sensual impressions, but at the deep final truth, which only meditation can discover, and only experience recognize. There is nothing done or omitted by him, which does not imply such a comparison of ends, such rejection of the least worthy, (as

far as they are incompatible with the rest,) such careful selection and arrangement of all that can be united, as can only be enjoyed by minds capable of going through the same process, and discovering the reasons for the choice. And, as there is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge, so there is nothing in them which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy. There is no test of our acquaintance with nature so absolute and unfailing as the degree of admiration we feel for Turner's painting. Precisely as we are shallow in our knowledge, vulgar in our feeling, and contracted in our views of principles, will the works of this artist be stumbling-blocks or foolishness to us :—precisely in the degree in which we are familiar with nature, constant in our observation of her, and enlarged in our understanding of her, will they expand before our eyes into glory and beauty. In every new insight which we obtain into the works of God, in every new idea which we receive from His creation, we shall find ourselves possessed of an interpretation and a guide to something in Turner's works which we had not before understood. We may range over Europe, from shore to shore ; and from every rock that we tread upon, every sky that passes over our heads, every local form of vegetation or of soil, we shall receive fresh illustration of his principles—fresh confirmation of his facts. We shall feel, wherever we go, that he has been there before us—whatever we see, that he has seen and seized before us : and we shall at last cease the investigation, with a well-grounded trust, that whatever we have been unable to account for, and what we still dislike in his works, has reason for it, and foundation like the rest ; and that even where he has failed or erred, there is a beauty in the failure which none are able to equal, and a dignity in the error which none are worthy to reprove.

There has been marked and constant progress in his mind ; he has not, like some few artists, been without childhood ; his course of study has been as evidently as it has been swiftly progressive, and in different stages of the struggle, sometimes one order of truth, sometimes another, has been aimed at or omitted. But from the beginning to the present height of his career, he has never sacrificed a

§ 6. And nothing which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy.

§ 7. His former rank and progress.

greater truth to a less. As he advanced, the previous knowledge or attainment was absorbed in what succeeded, or abandoned only if incompatible, and never abandoned without a gain ; and his present works present the sum and perfection of his accumulated knowledge, delivered with the impatience and passion of one who feels too much, and knows too much, and has too little time to say it in, to pause for expression, or ponder over his syllables. There is in them the obscurity, but the truth, of prophecy ; the instinctive and burning language, which would express less if it uttered more, which is indistinct only by its fullness, and dark with its abundant meaning. He feels now, with long-trained vividness and keenness of sense, too bitterly the impotence of the hand, and the vainness of the color to catch one shadow or one image of the glory which God has revealed to him. He has dwelt and communed with nature all the days of his life ; he knows her now too well, he cannot palter over the material littleness of her outward form ; he must give her soul, or he has done nothing, and he cannot do this with the flax, and the earth, and the oil. “ I cannot gather the sunbeams out of the east, or I would make *them* tell you what I have seen ; but read this, and interpret this, and let us remember together. I cannot gather the gloom out of the night-sky, or I would make that teach you what I have seen ; but read this, and interpret this, and let us feel together. And if you have not that within you which I can summon to my aid, if you have not the sun in your spirit, and the passion in your heart, which my words may awaken, though they be indistinct and swift, leave me ; for I will give you no patient mockery, no laborious insult of that glorious nature, whose I am and whom I serve. Let other servants imitate the voice and the gesture of their master, while they forget his message. Hear that message from me ; but remember, that the teaching of Divine truth must still be a mystery.”

§ 8. Standing of his present works. Their mystery is the consequence of their fullness.

CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION.—MODERN ART AND MODERN CRITICISM.

WE have only, in conclusion, to offer a few general remarks respecting modern art and modern criticism.

We wish, in the first place, to remove the appearance of invidiousness and partiality which the constant prominence given in the present portion of the work to the productions of one artist, can scarcely fail of bearing in the minds of most readers. When we pass to the examination of what is beautiful and expressive in art, we shall frequently find distinctive qualities in the minds even of inferior artists, which

§ 1. The entire prominence hitherto given to the works of one artist caused only by our not being able to take cognizance of character.

have led them to the pursuit and embodying of particular trains of thought, altogether different from those which direct the compositions of other men, and incapable of comparison with them. Now, when this is the case, we should consider it in the highest degree both invidious and illogical, to say of such different modes of exertion of the intellect, that one is in all points greater or nobler than another. We shall probably find something in the working of all minds which has an end and a power peculiar to itself, and which is deserving of free and full admiration, without any reference whatsoever to what has, in other fields, been accomplished by other modes of thought, and directions of aim. We shall, indeed, find a wider range and grasp in one man than in another ; but yet it will be our own fault if we do not discover something in the most limited range of mind which is different from, and in its way better than, anything presented to us by the more grasping intellect. We all know that the nightingale sings more nobly than the lark ; but who, therefore, would wish the lark not to sing, or would deny that it had a character of its own, which bore a part among the melodies of creation no less essential than that of the more richly-gifted

bird? And thus we shall find and feel that whatever difference may exist between the intellectual powers of one artist and another, yet wherever there is any true genius, there will be some peculiar lesson which

§ 2. The feelings of different artists are incapable of full comparison.

even the humblest will teach us more sweetly and perfectly than those far above them in prouder attributes of mind ; and we should be as mistaken as we should be unjust and invidious, if we refused to receive this their peculiar message with gratitude

and veneration, merely because it was a sentence and not a volume. But the case is different when we examine their relative fidelity to given facts.

§ 3. But the fidelity and truth of each are capable of real comparison.

That fidelity depends on no peculiar modes of thought or habits of character ; it is the result of keen sensibility, combined with high powers of memory and association. These qualities, as such, are the same in all men ; character or feeling may direct their choice to this or that object, but the fidelity with which they treat either the one or the other, is dependent on those simple powers of sense and intellect which are like and comparable in all, and of which we can always say that they are greater in this man, or less in that without reference to the character of the individual. Those feelings which direct Cox to the painting of wild, weedy banks, and cool, melting skies, and those which directed Barret to the painting of glowing foliage and melancholy twilight, are both just and beautiful in their way, and are both worthy of high praise and gratitude, without necessity, nay, without *proper* possibility of comparing one with the other. But the degree of fidelity with which the leaves of the one and the light of the other are rendered, depends upon faculties of sight, sense, and memory common to both, and perfectly comparable ; and we may say fearlessly, and without injustice, that one or the other, as the case may be, is more faithful in that which they have chosen to represent. It is also to be remembered that these faculties of sense and memory are not partial in their effect ; they will not induce fidelity in the rendering of one class of object, and fail of doing so in another. They act equally, and with equal results, whatever may be the matter subjected to them ; the same delicate sense which perceives the utmost grace of the fibres of a tree, will be

§ 4. Especially because they are equally manifested in the treatment of all subjects.

equally unerring in tracing the character of cloud ; and the quick memory which seizes and retains the circumstances of a flying effect of shadow or color, will be equally effectual in fixing the impression of the instantaneous form of a moving figure or a breaking wave. There are indeed one or two broad distinctions in the nature of the senses,—a sensibility to color, for instance, being very different from a sensibility to form ; so that a man may possess one without the other, and an artist may succeed in mere imitation of what is before him, of air, sunlight, etc., without possessing sensibility at all. But wherever we have, in the drawing of any one object, sufficient evidence of real intellectual power, of the sense which perceives the essential qualities of a thing, and the judgment which arranges them so as to illustrate each other, we may be quite certain that the same sense and judgment will operate equally on whatever is subjected to them, and that the artist will be equally great and masterly

§ 5. No man in his drawing of all that he attempts. Hence we
draws one thing may be quite sure that wherever an artist appears
well, if he can to be truthful in one branch of art, and not in
draw nothing else. to be truthful in one branch of art, and not in
another, the apparent truth is either owing to some trickery
of imitation, or is not so great as we suppose it to be. In
nine cases out of ten, people who are celebrated for drawing
only one thing, and *can* only draw one thing, draw that
one thing worse than anybody else. An artist may indeed con-
fine himself to a limited range of subject, but if he be really true
in his rendering of this, his power of doing more will be perpet-
ually showing itself in accessories and minor points. There are
few men, for instance, more limited in subject than Hunt, and
yet I do not think there is another man in the old Water-Color
Society, with so keen an eye for truth, or with power so uni-
versal. And this is the reason for the exceeding prominence
which in the foregoing investigation one or two artists have
always assumed over the rest, for the habits of accurate observa-
tion and delicate powers of hand which they possess, have equal
effect, and maintain the same superiority in their works, to
whatever class of subject they may be directed. And thus we
have been compelled, however unwillingly, to pass hastily by the
works of many gifted men, because, however pure their feeling,
or original their conceptions, they were wanting in those facul-

ties of the hand and mind which insure perfect fidelity to nature : it will be only hereafter, when we are at liberty to take full cognizance of the thought, however feebly it may be clothed in language, that we shall be able to do real justice to the disciples either of modern or of ancient art.

But as far as we have gone at present, and with respect only to the *material* truth, which is all that we have been able to investigate, the conclusion to which we must be led is as clear as it is inevitable ; that modern artists, as a body, are far more just and full in their views of material things than any landscape painters whose works are extant—but that J. M. W. Turner is the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the whole system of nature, and is, in this point of view, the only perfect landscape painter whom the world has ever seen.

Nor are we disposed to recede from our assertion made in Sec. I. Ch. I. § 10, that this material truth is indeed a perfect test of the relative rank of painters, though it does not in itself constitute that rank. We shall be able to prove that truth and beauty, knowledge and imagination, invariably are associated in art ; and we shall be able to show that not only in truth to nature, but in all other points, Turner is the greatest landscape painter who has ever lived. But his superiority is, in matters of feeling, one of kind, not of degree. Superiority of degree implies a superseding of others, superiority of kind only sustaining a more important, but not more necessary part, than others. If *truth* were all that we required from art, all other painters might cast aside their brushes in despair, for all that they have done he has done more fully and accurately ; but when we pass to the higher requirements of art, beauty and character, their contributions are all equally necessary and desirable, because different, and however inferior in position or rank, are still perfect of their kind ; their inferiority is only that of the lark to the nightingale, or of the violet to the rose.

Such then is the rank and standing of our modern artists. We have, living with us, and painting for us, the greatest painter of *all* time ; a man with whose supremacy of power no intellect of past ages can be put in comparison for a moment.

§ 6. General conclusions to be derived from our past investigation.

§ 7. Truth, a standard of all excellence.

Let us next inquire what is the rank of our critics. Public taste,

§ 8. Modern criticism. (change-fulness of public taste.

I believe, as far as it is the encourager and supporter of art has been the same in all ages,—a fitful and vacillating current of vague impression, perpetually liable to change, subject to epidemic desires, and agitated by infectious passion, the slave of fashion, and the fool of fancy, but yet always distinguishing with singular clear-sightedness, between that which is best and that which is worst of the particular class of food which its morbid appetite may call for; never failing to distinguish that which is produced by intellect, from that which is not, though it may be intellect degraded by

§ 9. Yet associated with a certain degree of judgment.

ministering to its misguided will. Public taste may thus degrade a race of men capable of the highest efforts in art into the portrait painters of ephemeral fashions, but it will yet not fail of discovering who, among these portrait painters, is the man of most mind. It will separate the man who would have become Buonaroti from the man who would have become Bandinelli, though it will employ both in painting curls, and feathers, and bracelets. Hence, generally speaking, there is no *comparative* injustice done, no false elevation of the fool above the man of mind, provided only that the man of mind will condescend to supply the particular article which the public chooses to want. Of course a thousand modifying circumstances interfere with the action of the general rule; but, taking one case with another, we shall very constantly find the price which the picture commands in the market a pretty fair standard of the artist's rank of intellect.

§ 10. Duty of the press.

The press, therefore, and all who pretend to lead the public taste, have not so much to direct the multitude whom to go to, as what to ask for. Their business is not to tell us which is our best painter, but to tell us whether we are making our best painter do his best.

Now none are capable of doing this, but those whose principles of judgment are based both on thorough *practical* knowledge of art, and on broad general views of what is true and right,

§ 11. Qualifications necessary for discharging it.

without reference to what has been done at one time or another, or in one school or another. Nothing can be more perilous to the cause of art, than the constant ringing in our painters' ears of the names of

great predecessors, as their examples or masters. I had rather hear a great poet, entirely original in his feeling and aim, rebuked or maligned for not being like Wordsworth or Coleridge, than a great painter criticised for not putting us in mind of Claude or Poussin. But such references to former excellence are the only refuge and resource of persons endeavoring to be critics without being artists. They cannot tell you whether a thing is right or not; but they can tell you whether it is like something else or not. And the whole tone of

§ 12. General incapability of modern critics.

modern criticism—as far as it is worthy of being called criticism—sufficiently shows it to proceed entirely from persons altogether unversed in practice, and ignorant of truth, but possessing just enough of feeling to enjoy the solemnity of ancient art, who, not distinguishing that which is really exalted and valuable in the modern school, nor having any just idea of the real ends or capabilities of landscape art, consider nothing right which is not based on the conventional principles of the ancients, and nothing true which has more of nature in it than of Claude. But it is strange that

§ 13. And inconsistency with themselves.

while the noble and unequalled works of modern landscape painters are thus maligned and misunderstood, our historical painters—such as we have—are permitted to pander more fatally every year to the vicious English taste, which can enjoy nothing but what is theatrical, entirely unchastised, nay, encouraged and lauded by the very men who endeavor to hamper our great landscape painters with rules derived from consecrated blunders. The very critic who has just passed one of the noblest works of Turner—that is to say, a masterpiece of art, to which Time can show no parallel—with a ribald jest, will yet stand gaping in admiration before the next piece of dramatic glitter and grimace, suggested by the society, and adorned with the appurtenances of the greenroom, which he finds hung low upon the wall as a brilliant example of the ideal of English art. It is natural enough indeed, that the persons who are disgusted by what is pure and noble, should be delighted with what is vicious and degraded; but it is singular that those who are constantly talking of Claude and Poussin, should never even pretend to a thought of Raffaele. We could excuse them for not comprehending Turner, if they only would

apply the same cut-and-dried criticisms where they might be applied with truth, and productive of benefit ; but we endure not the paltry compound of ignorance, false taste, and pretension, which assumes the dignity of classical feeling, that it may be able to abuse whatever is above the level of its understanding, but bursts into genuine rapture with all that is meretricious, if sufficiently adapted to the calibre of its comprehension.

To notice such criticisms, however, is giving them far more importance than they deserve. They can lead none astray but those whose opinions are absolutely valueless, and we did not begin this chapter with any intent of wasting our time on these small critics, but in the hope of pointing out to the periodical press what kind of criticism is now most required by our school of landscape art, and how it may be in their power, if they will, to regulate its impulses, without checking its energies, and really to advance both the cause of the artist, and the taste of the public.

One of the most morbid symptoms of the general taste of the present day, is a too great fondness for unfinished works. Brilliancy and rapidity of execution are everywhere sought as the highest good, and so that a picture be cleverly handled as far as it is carried, little regard is paid to its imperfection as a whole. Hence some artists are permitted, and others compelled, to confine themselves to a manner of working altogether destructive of their powers, and to tax their energies, not to concentrate the greatest quantity of thought on the least possible space of canvas, but to produce the greatest quantity of glitter and claptrap in the shortest possible time. To the idler and the trickster in art, no system can be more advantageous ; but to the man who is really desirous of doing something worth having lived for—to a man of industry, energy, or feeling, we believe it to be the cause of the most bitter discouragement. If ever, working upon a favorite subject or a beloved idea, he is induced to tax his powers to the utmost, and to spend as much time upon his picture as he feels necessary for its perfection, he will not be able to get so high a price for the result, perhaps, of a twelvemonth's thought, as he might have obtained for half-a-dozen sketches with a forenoon's work in each, and he is compelled either to

§ 14. How the press may really advance the cause of art.

§ 15. Morbid fondness at the present day for unfinished works.

fall back upon mechanism, or to starve. Now the press should especially endeavor to convince the public, that by this purchase of imperfect pictures they not only prevent all progress and development of high talent, and set tricksters and mechanics on a level with men of mind, but defraud and injure themselves. For there is no doubt whatever, that, estimated merely by the quantity of pleasure it is capable of conveying, a well-finished picture is worth to its possessor half-a-dozen incomplete ones ; and that a perfect drawing is, simply as a source of delight, better worth a hundred guineas than a drawing half as finished is worth thirty. On the other hand, the body of our artists should be kept in mind, that by indulging the public with rapid and unconsidered work, they are not only depriving themselves of the benefit which each picture ought to render to them, as a piece of practice and study, but they are destroying the refinement of general taste, and rendering it impossible for themselves ever to find a market for more careful works, supposing that they were inclined to execute them. Nor need any single artist be afraid of setting the example, and producing labored works, at advanced prices, among the cheap, quick drawings of the day. The public will soon find the value of the complete work, and will be more ready to give a large sum for that which is inexhaustible, than a quota of it for that which they are wearied of in a month. The artist who never lets the price command the picture, will soon find the picture command the price. And it ought to be a rule with every painter never to let a picture leave his easel while it is yet capable of improvement, or of having more thought put into it. The general effect is often perfect and pleasing, and not to be improved upon, when the details and facts are altogether imperfect and unsatisfactory. It may be difficult—perhaps the most difficult task of art—to complete these details, and not to hurt the general effect ; but until the artist can do this, his art is imperfect and his picture unfinished. That only is a complete picture which has both the general wholeness and effect of nature, and the inexhaustible perfection of nature's details. And it is only in the effort to unite these that a painter really improves. By aiming only at details, he

§ 16. By which the public defraud themselves.

§ 17. And in considering to which, artists ruin themselves.

§ 18. Necessity of finishing works of art perfectly.

becomes a mechanic ; by aiming only at generals, he becomes a trickster : his fall in both cases is sure. Two questions the artist has, therefore, always to ask himself,—first, “ Is my whole right ? ” Secondly, “ Can my details be added to ? Is there a single space in the picture where I can crowd in another thought ? Is there a curve in it which I can modulate—a line which I can graduate—a vacancy I can fill ? Is there a single spot which the eye, by any peering or prying, can fathom or exhaust ? If so, my picture is imperfect ; and if, in modulating the line or filling the vacancy, I hurt the general effect, my art is imperfect.”

But, on the other hand, though incomplete pictures ought neither to be produced nor purchased, careful and real *sketches* ought to be valued much more highly than they are. Studies in chalk, of landscape, should form a part of every Exhibition, and a room should be allotted to drawings and designs of figures in the Academy. We should be heartily glad to see the room which is now devoted to bad drawings of incorporeal and imaginary architecture—of things which never were, and which, thank Heaven ! never will be—occupied instead, by careful studies for historical pictures ; not blots of chiaroscuro, but delicate outlines with the pen or crayon.

From young artists, in landscape, nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bona fide imitation* of nature. They have no business to ape the execution of masters,—to utter weak and disjointed repetitions of other men’s words, and mimic the gestures of the preacher, without understanding his meaning or sharing in his emotions. We do not want their crude ideas of composition, their unformed conceptions of the Beautiful, their unsystematized experiments upon the Sublime. We scorn their velocity ; for it is without direction : we reject their decision ; for it is without grounds : we condemn their composition ; for it is without materials : we reprobate their choice ; for it is without comparison. Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize ; but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of nature, and tracing the finger of God. Nothing is so bad a symptom, in the work of young artists, as

§ 19. *Sketches* not sufficiently encouraged.

§ 20. Brilliancy of execution or efforts at invention not to be tolerated in young artists.

too much dexterity of handling ; for it is a sign that they are satisfied with their work, and have tried to do nothing more than they were able to do. Their work should be full of failures ; for these are the signs of efforts. They should keep to quiet colors—grays and browns ; and, making the early works of Turner their example, as his latest are to be their object of emulation, should go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instruction, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing : believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth. Then, when their memories are stored, and their imaginations fed, and their hands firm, let them take up the scarlet and the gold, give the reins to their fancy, and show us what their heads are made of. We will follow them wherever they choose to lead ; we will check at nothing ; they are then our masters, and are fit to be so. They have placed themselves above our criticism, and we will listen to their words in all faith and humility ; but not unless they themselves have before bowed, in the same submission, to a higher Authority and Master.

Among our greater artists, the chief want, at the present day, is that of *solemnity* and definite purpose. We have too much picture-manufacturing, too much making up of lay figures with a certain quantity of foliage, and a certain quantity of sky, and a certain quantity of water,—a little bit of all that is pretty, a little sun, and a little shade,—a touch of pink, and a touch of blue,—a little sentiment, and a little sublimity, and a little humor, and a little antiquarianism,—all very neatly associated in a very charming picture, but not working together for a definite end. Or if the aim be higher, as was the case with Barrett and Varley, we are generally put off with stale repetitions of eternal composition ; a great tree, and some goats, and a bridge and a lake, and the Temple at Tivoli, etc. Now we should like to see our artists working out, with all exertion of their concentrated powers, such marked pieces of landscape character as might bear upon them the impression of solemn, earnest, and pervading thought, definitely directed, and aided by every accessory of

§ 21. The duty and after privileges of all students.

§ 22. Necessity among our greater artists of more singleness of aim.

detail, color, and idealized form, which the disciplined feeling, accumulated knowledge, and unspared labor of the painter could supply. I have alluded, in the second preface, to the deficiency of our modern artists in these great points of earnestness and completeness; and I revert to it, in conclusion, as their paramount failing, and one fatal in many ways to the interests of art. Our landscapes are all descriptive, not reflective, agreeable and conversational, but not impressive nor didactic. They have no other foundation than

“ That vivacious versatility,
Which many people take for want of heart.
They err; 'tis merely what is called “ mobility;”
A thing of temperament, and *not of art*,
Though seeming so from its supposed facility.

This makes your actors, *artists*, and romancers;
Little that's great—but much of what is clever.”

Only it is to be observed that—in painters—this vivacity is *not* always versatile. It is to be wished that it were, but it is no such easy matter to be versatile in painting. Shallowness of thought insures not its variety, nor rapidity of production its originality. Whatever may be the case in literature, facility is in art inconsistent with invention. The artist who covers most canvas always shows, even in the sum of his works, the least expenditure of thought.* I have never seen more than four works of John Lewis on the walls of the Water-Color Exhibition; I have counted forty from other hands; but have found in the end that the forty were a multiplication of one, and the four a concentration of forty. And therefore I would earnestly plead with all our artists, that they should make it a law *never* to repeat themselves; for he who never repeats himself will not produce an inordinate number of pictures, and he who limits himself in number gives himself at least the opportunity of completion. Besides, all repetition is degradation of the art; it reduces it from headwork to handwork; and indicates some-

* Of course this assertion does not refer to the differences in mode of execution, which enable one painter to work faster or slower than another, but only to the exertion of mind, commonly manifested by the artist, according as he is sparing or prodigal of production.

thing like a persuasion on the part of the artist that nature is exhaustible or art perfectible ; perhaps, even, by him exhausted and perfected. All copyists are contemptible, but the copyist of himself the most so, for he has the worst original.

Let then every picture be painted with earnest intention of impressing on the spectator some elevated emotion, and exhibiting to him some one particular, but exalted, beauty. Let a real subject be carefully selected, in itself suggestive of, and replete with, this feeling and beauty ; let an effect of light and color be taken which may harmonize with both ; and a sky, not invented, but recollected, (in fact, all so-called invention is in landscape nothing more than appropriate recollection—good in proportion as it is distinct.) Then let the details of the foreground be separately studied, especially those plants which appear peculiar to the place : if any one, however unimportant, occurs there, which occurs not elsewhere, it should occupy a prominent position ; for the other details, the highest examples of the ideal forms *

§ 23. What should be their general aim.

* “Talk of improving nature when it *is* nature—Nonsense.”—*E. V. Rippingille*. I have not yet spoken of the difference—even in what we commonly call Nature—between imperfect and ideal form : the study of this difficult question must, of course, be deferred until we have examined the nature of our impressions of beauty ; but it may not be out of place here to hint at the want of care in many of our artists to distinguish between the real work of nature and the diseased results of man’s interference with her. Many of the works of our greatest artists have for their subjects nothing but hacked and hewn remnants of farm-yard vegetation, branded root and branch, from their birth, by the prong and the pruning-hook ; and the feelings once accustomed to take pleasure in such abortions, can scarcely become perceptive of forms truly ideal. I have just said (423) that young painters should go to nature trustingly,—rejecting nothing, and selecting nothing : so they should ; but they must be careful that it *is* nature to whom they go—nature in her liberty—not as servant-of-all-work in the hands of the agriculturist, nor stiffened into court-dress by the landscape gardener. It must be the pure, wild volition and energy of the creation which they follow—not subdued to the furrow, and cicatrized to the pollard—not persuaded into proprieties, nor pampered into diseases. Let them work by the torrent-side, and in the forest shadows ; not by purling brooks and under “ tonsile shades.” It is impossible to enter here into discussion of what man can or cannot do, by assisting natural operations : it is an intricate question : nor can I, without anticipating what I shall have hereafter to advance, show how or why it happens that the racehorse is *not* the ar

or characters which he requires are to be selected by the artist from his former studies, or fresh studies made expressly for the purpose, leaving as little as possible—nothing, in fact, beyond their connection and arrangement—to mere imagination. Finally, when his picture is thus perfectly realized in all its parts, let him dash as much of it out as he likes; throw, if he will, mist around it—darkness—or dazzling and confused light—whatever, in fact, impetuous feeling or vigorous imagination may dictate or desire; the forms, once so laboriously realized, will come out whenever they *do* occur with a startling and impressive truth, which the uncertainty in which they are veiled will enhance rather than diminish; and the imagination, strengthened by discipline and fed with truth, will achieve the utmost of creation that is possible to finite mind.

The artist who thus works will soon find that he cannot repeat himself if he would; that new fields of exertion, new

tist's ideal of a horse, nor a prize tulip his ideal of a flower; but so it is. As far as the painter is concerned, man never touches nature but to spoil;—he operates on her as a barber would on the Apollo; and if he sometimes increases some particular power or excellence,—strength or agility in the animal—tallness, or fruitfulness, or solidity in the tree,—he invariably loses that *balance* of good qualities which is the chief sign of perfect specific form; above all, he destroys the appearance of free *volition* and *felicity*, which, as I shall show hereafter, is one of the essential characters of organic beauty. Until, however, I can enter into the discussion of the nature of beauty, the only advice I can safely give the young painter, is to keep clear of clover-fields and parks, and to hold to the unpenetrated forest and the unfurrowed hill. There he will find that every influence is noble, even when destructive—that decay itself is beautiful,—and that, in the elaborate and lovely composition of all things, if at first sight it seems less studied than the works of men, the appearance of Art is only prevented by the presence of Power.

“Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her: 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.”

WORDSWORTH.

subjects of contemplation open to him in nature day by day, and that, while others lament the weakness of their invention, *he* has nothing to lament but the shortness of life.

And now but one word more, respecting the great artist whose works have formed the chief subject of this treatise. All the *greatest* qualities of those works—all that is mental in them, has not yet been so much as touched upon. None but their lightest and least essential excellences have been proved, and, therefore, the enthusiasm with which I speak of them must necessarily appear overcharged and absurd. It might, perhaps, have been more prudent to have withheld the full expression of it till I had shown the full grounds for it; but once written, such expression must remain till I have justified it. And, indeed, I think there is enough, even in the foregoing pages, to show that these works are, as far as concerns the ordinary critics of the press, above all animadversion, and above all praise; and that, by the public, they are not to be received as in any way subjects or matters of opinion, but of Faith. We are not to approach them to be pleased, but to be taught; not to form a judgment, but to receive a lesson. Our periodical writers, therefore, may save themselves the trouble either of blaming or praising: their duty is not to pronounce opinions upon the work of a man who has walked with nature threescore years; but to impress upon the public the respect with which they are to be received, and to make request to him, on the part of the people of England, that he would now touch no unimportant work—that he would not spend time on slight or small pictures, but give to the nation a series of grand, consistent, systematic, and completed poems. We desire that he should follow out his own thoughts and intents of heart, without reference to any human authority. But we request, in all humility, that those thoughts may be seriously and loftily given; and that the whole power of his unequalled intellect may be exerted in the production of such works as may remain forever for the teaching of the nations. In all that he says, we believe; in all that he does we trust.* It

* It has been hinted, in some of the reviews of the Second Volume of this work, that the writer's respect for Turner has diminished since the above passage was written. He would, indeed, have been deserving of

is therefore that we pray him to utter nothing lightly—to do nothing regardlessly. He stands upon an eminence, from which he looks back over the universe of God, and forward over the generations of men. Let every work of his hand be a history of the one, and a lesson to the other. Let each exertion of his mighty mind be both hymn and prophecy,—adoration to the Deity,—revelation to mankind.

POSTSCRIPT.

The above passage was written in the year 1843 ; too late. It is true that soon after the publication of this work, the abuse of the press, which had been directed against Turner with unceasing virulence during the production of his noblest works, sank into timid animadversion, or changed into unintelligent praise ; but not before illness, and, in some degree, mortification, had enfeebled the hand and chilled the heart of the painter.

This year (1851) he has no picture on the walls of the Academy ; and the *Times* of May 3d says, “ We miss those works of INSPIRATION ! ”

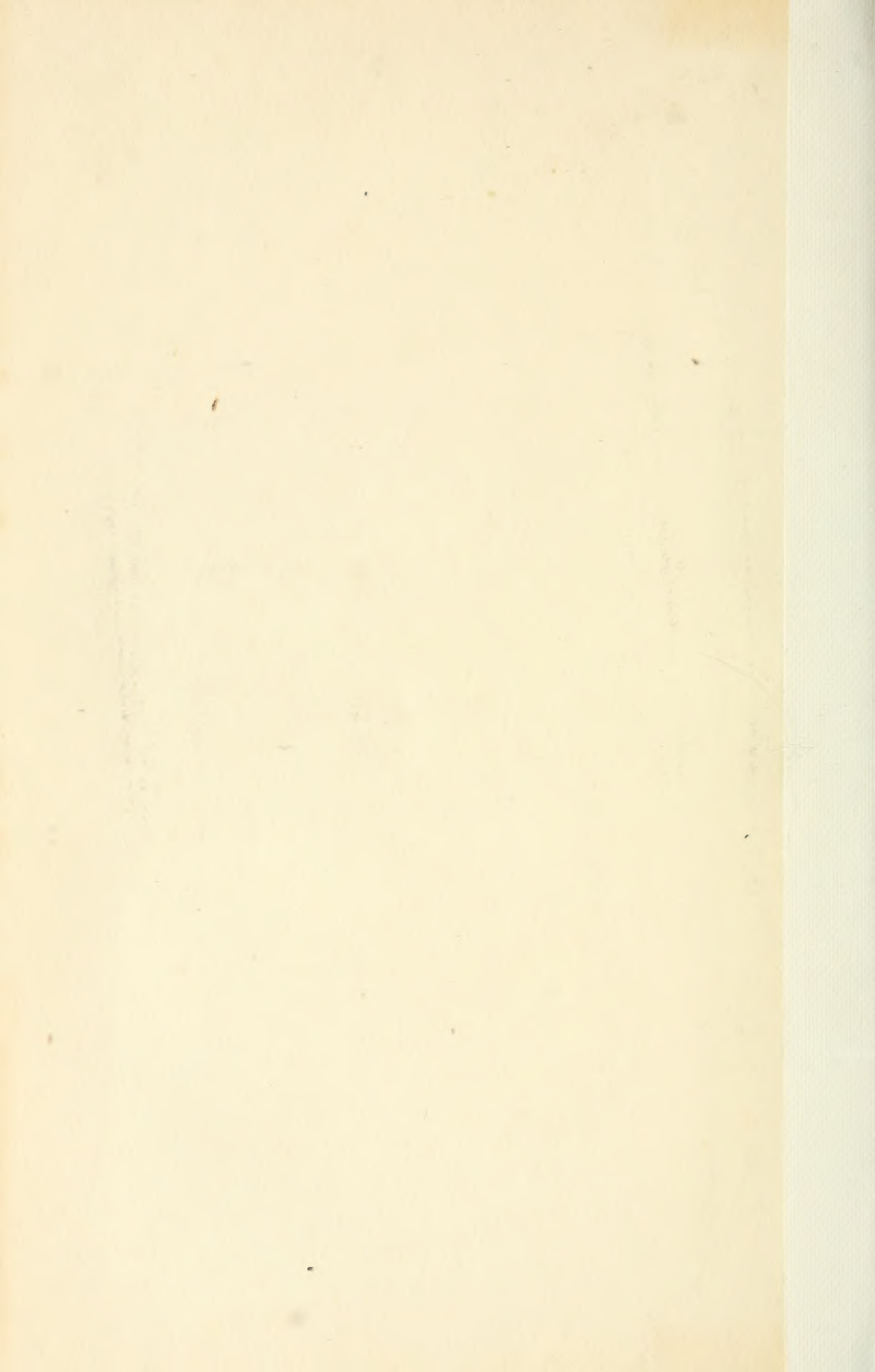
We miss ! Who misses ?—The populace of England rolls by to weary itself in the great bazaar of Kensington, little thinking

little attention if, with the boldness manifested on the preceding pages, he had advanced opinions based on so shallow foundation as that the course of three years could effect modification of them. He was justified by the sudden accession of power which the great artist exhibited at the period when this volume was first published, as well as by the low standard of the criticism to which he was subjected, in claiming, with respect to his then works, a submission of judgment, greater indeed than may generally be accorded to even the highest human intellect, yet not greater than such a master might legitimately claim from such critics ; and the cause of the peculiar form of advocacy into which the preceding chapters necessarily fell, has been already stated more than once. In the following sections it became necessary, as they treated a subject of intricate relations, and peculiar difficulty, to obtain a more general view of the scope and operation of art, and to avoid all conclusions in any wise referable to the study of particular painters. The reader will therefore find, not that lower rank is attributed to Turner, but that he is now compared with the greatest men, and occupies his true position among the most noble of all time.

that a day will come when those veiled vestals and prancing amazons, and goodly merchandise of precious stones and gold, will all be forgotten as though they had not been, but that the light which has faded from the walls of the Academy is one which a million of Koh-i-Noors could not rekindle, and that the year 1851 will in the far future be remembered less for what it has displayed than for what it has withdrawn.

DENMARK HILL, *June*, 1851.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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